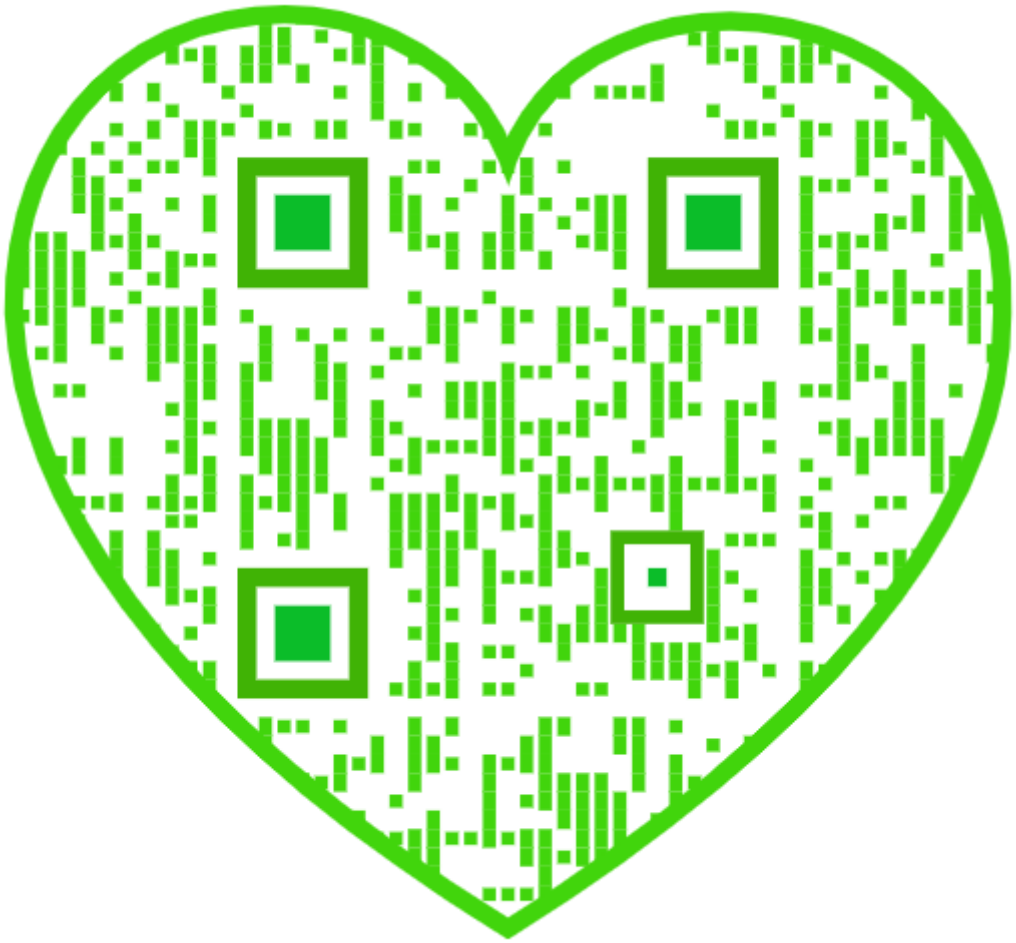

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TROUT-FISHING IN BROOKS

ITS SCIENCE AND ART

BY

G. GARROW-GREEN

('Black Hackle' of *The Field* and *The Fishing Gazette*)

ILLUSTRATED

"High to their fount, this day, amid the hills,
And woodlands warbling round, trace up the brooks."
—THOMSON.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

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To R. B. MARSTON, *Esq., Editor of 'The Fishing Gazette,' this little work is dedicated in slight token of the author's appreciation of his invaluable assistance to anglers at home and abroad and of his unfailing courtesy, and as a small thank-offering for his kind encouragement in that my first literary effort, a short article upon Brook Trout Fishing, was published in 'The Fishing Gazette' twenty-six years ago.*

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE

WHILE it would scarcely be cricket to lay the blame of presenting the public with yet another book about Trout-fishing upon the shoulders of that thorough sportsman, my dedicatee, I have a vague idea that he cannot escape all responsibility. For the first lines I ever penned on angling appeared in the correspondence columns of *The Fishing Gazette*, and related to the capture of a huge pike in lough Conn by one of my sergeants who, producing the skull-bones in evidence, assured me that the monster scaled 63 lbs. Since then, most of my piscatory scribbling has found place in the same famous journal. Nevertheless, the inexcusable conceit which has led to my coming out in book form is my own. Yet, after all, why inexcusable? Although, a "satchelled schoolboy," I caught my first dish of Trout in a river, and have exploited waters of size ever since, the brooks have ever

appealed to me most, and I have ventured to write this little brochure for sheer love of them, and because their claims to any special notice have apparently been disregarded by Trout fishermen. For I know of no work dealing with brook-angling *per se*. That the subject is worthy of better treatment than I can give it, recurring seasons have amply proved to me. Therefore, remembering that *qu'excuse, s'accuse*, I apologise no more. On the contrary, I shall boldly say that this is a good book, a book to be read, and one that deserves a place on every angler's shelf, a book which should fulfil its mission in leading many a doubting fisherman to the banks of these delightful little streams whose Trout are often so much bigger than is generally known, and whose variety and charm are undeniable.

I have to express my thanks to the Editors of *The Shooting Times* and *The Bazaar, Exchange and Mart* for their permission to use extracts from papers which I originally wrote for those journals, in this work.

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TROUT-FISHING IN BROOKS

I: INTRODUCTORY

I DO not propose to institute an invidious comparison between rivers great or small and the modest little brooks to which I want to entice the reader—there are more trout in the former—but I do think, and experience has confirmed the opinion, that the claims of the last are not established at anything like their true sporting value. How many a man will view contemptuously the tributary beck he drives over *en route* to larger water; yet, were he *knowledgeable*, he would have drawn trumps in the beck.

I met a certain colonel one May day on the Dart who complained bitterly that except half a dozen fingerlings he had done nothing for two days. His flies were all right, but the thorough education the fish had had all the spring, plus pollution as the water fined down, had rendered them singularly obtuse to artificial dainties. I

strongly recommended his trying the Harbourne, a brook tributary, where he went straightway, to return well satisfied with several brace of well-sized trout.

I recollect, when a boy, going to fish a stream one could jump over, one sultry July morning. When I reached the bridge a gentleman in a dog-cart stopped me.

Quoth he, " Surely you don't expect to get any trout in that place, and in such weather ? "

I expressed a contrary opinion.

" Well," he continued, " I shall be passing here again about five o'clock, and I'll bet you half a sovereign you don't get half a dozen sprats."

I could only muster a shilling, but this was accepted against his ten.

By cautious procedure I espied an eight-ounce fish in the very first little pool, and got him. Trout came on well that day, enough for me to add that my challenger lost (and paid) his wager, as I showed him twenty-four decent fish, very few under ¼ lb., and many of them nearly up to or quite the ½ lb. He vowed he could not understand it, thus plainly showing that he was not a brook-angler.

Again, when quartered in King's County, Ireland, I noticed a tiny beck, a tributary of the

Face p.

1. A DISH OF BROOK-TROUT. The two best, 1 lb. 1 oz. and 14 oz.
2. AN AWKWARD SPOT IN SPRING

Brosna, flowing through a demesne for which permission was accorded with many expressions of incredulity as to the presence of even minnows. It was amusing to note the amazement of the owner when I presented him with thirteen trout, two of them quite ¾ lb., three of 8 oz. or more, and not one of the rest under 5 oz. The lure in both cases was worm, the water was dead low, and I only instance them out of many hundreds to illustrate my contention that I hold a winning brief.

Now, there are brooks and brooks. Some are, of course, smaller than others. Some are narrow through most of their course with few shallows, but many easy-running 'guts' and still parts from 2 ft. to 6 ft. deep. Others are a succession of little runs, stickles and pools, often widening out to six yards or so in the shallows, though looking less. Some flow directly into the sea, holding a regular run of sea-trout, but the majority are tributaries of rivers more or less sizeable, and these are populated with trout from such rivers which run up to spawn, or move in freshets and stay there, in addition to their own native supply.

Let there be no mistake about their being stocked. They are, and, as a rule, well, and the road to success in catching their fish is an art

widely differing from large stream fishing. I should like here to differentiate between brooks flowing through a purely pastoral country with a gentle gradient and their fellows of the moor and mountain valley. Boulders and heather chiefly mark the course of the latter, which is usually rapid, with a bottom of rock and gravel and exceptionally clear water in normal conditions. There is a lack of the weeds necessary for the production of many fattening larvæ and flies, a scarcity of worms, minnows, fresh-water shrimps, etc., and there is little of the foliage which harbours various trout dainties. In such streams, from these and other causes, the fish mostly run small, as on Dartmoor. But while the general methods of fishing are common to all, I desire to more especially devote these pages to the brooks of placid flow which meander through fertile vales and flat cultivated districts. Here there is abundance of food of every description, plenty of deep, restful places with a bottom of clay rich in animalcule, and umbrageous, weeded banks full of nutritious diet for the trout.

As a consequence, it may be taken for granted that there is reason for the greater development of the fish in these quieter brooks. As a matter of fact, they are to be caught of sizes which would

disgrace no fishery of larger pretensions. A weight of 1 lb. is by no means rare, 2 lb. is quite possible, and, not long since, I knew positively of two specimens angled from Cornish brooks of this character which scaled 3 lb. 8 oz., and 3 lb. 14 oz. respectively. Of course, the general run cannot be expected to go to chalk-stream dimensions, and it would be misleading to talk only of notable captures. Still, no angler need despise fish of from 4 oz. to 12 oz. and over which are commonly killed by a proficient in the course of a day's brook-trouting in the waters to which I more particularly allude.

But what pen can paint the exquisite variety these little streams present with their mimic cascades and wee pools, their light melody that stirred Tennyson's blood as he sang their praises, their thick, fishy-looking runs over which, on a hot day, the gnats hover in clouds, and dark, still haunts overhung by bush and briar ?

The fascination of them leads a man on and yet on, ever hoping, ever looking forward to fresh vantage-spots, and, as he rambles up, each little stretch and waterfall seems to promise better than the last place, and he is loth to leave them ; the glamour of the brook has got hold of him.

On such as wander through wild glens o'er-shadowed by heights, amid rocks and heather, if the angler love solitude, he may meet with but a stray shepherd, and realise that "sweetness in the mountain air" to the full. Should inclination lead him to those that flow through a richer country, through lush meadows, and pastures where the cattle stand knee-deep, lazing the hours away, or where the trees meeting overhead form a glorious canopy, other charms await him. Here are leafy dells and flower-spangled meads, where from the time of primroses and bluebells to when the ripe blackberry clusters droop over the stream, the scene is ever fresh and full with delights to the lover of nature, which every true angler should be if he hopes to extract complete sweetness from his outings.

Such an one will note so many things which appeal to him. The sapphire and russet flash of his brother fisherman, the kingfisher, darting past his rod, that dainty little gentleman in evening dress with white waistcoat, the water ouzel, bowing to him from a rock ere he, too, flits by; the vole, as with outstretched, furry tail, he leisurely swims across some dark pool. And everywhere there are ferns and flowers. What man but will experience a calm enjoyment, a

sense of tranquillity, rest from the stress and worry of life and from all mundane troubles as he listens to the liquid notes of mavis or merle from the fresh greenery of the beeches, the carol of the soaring lark, the gentle cooing of the quests and the pleasant chatter of his other bird companions? How soothing it all is, and how restful it feels, as, with the scent of new-mown hay in his nostrils and the music of the brook in his ears, he wanders through the painted fields. Somehow, I think Nature appeals to us trout-fishermen more strongly when we seek her by the brookside than by larger waters. In the last, we are less alone; there is often competition and jealousy, a hurry to be the first at some particular stretch, or what not. The surroundings of a narrower limit seem to bring us more in touch with their beauties, and we feel a sort of affectionate interest in them, that friendship of the stream which never fades from the memory.

This sport, to be perfect, must be pursued alone. The water is not big enough for two, and 'de'il tak' the hindmost' would generally apply to the efforts of a second rod. It is not a preparatory art for more ample rivers, being one *per se*. The late Francis Francis, who loved it, styled it the *dolce far niente* of trout-fishing; nevertheless,

I have always found it to entail a good deal of hard work if practised with real ardour, for, like all field sports, the *non palma sine pulvere* must be taken into account. It may be pointed out that for several reasons these small streams are unfitted for the purposes of clubs and fisheries, and are comparatively unnoticed. In a large number of cases the fishing rights belong to the farmers, who rarely refuse a polite application for leave, merely stipulating that all gates be kept fastened, which no considerate angler would omit to do. Where a landlord preserves, a day of more is usually courteously given, and in both respects I have been fortunate in England, and the results of many happy expeditions have often astonished the admirers of more pretentious waters. Scotland and Ireland teem with such brooks, and in the latter country they are almost all free and practically unfished.

In concluding these remarks I trust that the angler to whom £ s. d. is a consideration in connection with his sport will give a thought to this branch of the craft, which is not only inexpensive but far more affording than is generally known, and which brings one in touch with the most enchanting environment.

If I should seem over-inclined to the didactic in

describing the methods of brook-angling, I hope that my earnest desire to assist the novice will plead in extenuation. While it must be admitted that no instruction can equal practical lessons by the waterside, it will be also conceded that of all forms of trout-fishing, such instruction in this science would be the most difficult to procure for the sufficient reason that though often perfunctorily tried, but few fishermen have made it a peculiar study. If, then, I can clearly point out the way in simple language which will be easily intelligible to the attentive reader, I doubt not that he will soon feel competent to essay these charming miniature rivers, and acquire a success which will amply repay him for his trouble.

II: THE BROOK-ANGLER'S EQUIPMENT

TO the angler whose training in the great school of experience has been limited, a study of the dealers' catalogues would convey the impression that quite a large assortment of wares for the capture of trout is desirable if not indispensable. An old hand at the game would soon undeceive him, with the material result of considerable advantage to his pocket.

I knew an old poacher in Ireland whose scanty tackle found room—and to spare—in a tattered penny song-book, and whose rod was not worth half-a-crown, who until he let me into some of his secrets used to confound and astonish me by his marvellous takes of trout. Of course, it was not that his paucity of paraphernalia had anything to do with it; it was the man, not the tackle.

Nor do I suggest that the brook-fisher should go to work with so poor an equipment; but the fact is there are so many pseudo-ingenious devices for trout-catching advertised that one is liable to waste money on articles, some wholly unnecessary, many practically useless. For actual work it is surprising how little gear is really required.

We are all familiar with that perennial pictorial joke which depicts an elaborately-got-up rodsman fishless and perplexed while a rustic urchin near by, armed with a branch of a tree, twine, meat-hook and lobworm, is covering the greensward with finny spoil. If this interesting episode of the simple life ever came off, it must not be attributed to the rig-out of the candidate so ignominiously defeated, but to his lack of knowing what to do with the good gifts of fortune. I doubt the urchin would have made much hand of a brook at summer level, and this reminds me of a sanguine gentleman who was referred to me regarding one in the West Country. He met me by appointment to go a-fishing, and surprised me by producing only the second and third joints of an ordinary rod, with the remark that the seven feet would be quite long enough for such a place. He was speedily disillusioned, and the moral I would emphatically point is this: Do not attempt any brook with a rod under 10½ ft., and one of 11 ft. is better still. Not that any fault can be found with the short and light fly-rods now so much in vogue. Many of them are exquisite weapons, and with such an one as Hardy and others can turn out no man need fear an encounter with even Salar himself.

But I had better give my reasons for advocating what might be deemed an excessive length in proportion to the narrowness of the waters to be exploited. First, then, a longer rod keeps one much farther from the edge, a matter of no small importance in brook work. Second, it admits of a considerably shorter line out, another desideratum. Third, it will do a fish up more quickly, and help to prevent one from running riot in awkward places; and fourth, its reach is of the utmost advantage when casting over broad growths of briars, etc. A fly-rod of this length, to which the owner is accustomed, is the most serviceable rod he could use, and it suffices for all purposes irrespective of lure. I would merely suggest that it should have plenty of backbone, and, without being too wobbly, should certainly not be on the stiff side. I look on a brook rod as on a musical instrument, responsive to the hand however delicately manipulated, obedient to the slightest impulse: in a word, entirely subservient to the mind of the performer. The little stiffness required in dry fly-fishing a river is here unnecessary, while in the neat accuracy essential for placing a worm effectively and safely some elasticity in the rod is a considerable factor. It does not matter what material it is made of. My

own favourite is an 11 ft. fly rod built by the late Mr. Walbran, of Leeds, and cost 21s. The butt is ash, middle piece hickory, and top lancewood, and it is stained the darkest shade of green. As to winch and line, any reel which balances the rod will answer; perhaps preferably one with a light check, with the usual waterproofed silk fly-line. A landing-net is, of course, indispensable, and the angler can use the one which best suits him. My net is a primitive affair, simply a $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. handle of lancewood without knuckle-joint or clip, attached to a 14 in. cane ring, and carried on Mr. E. M. Tod's* plan, *viz.*, slung through two large brass rings fastened to the creel at top and bottom of opposite corners. It never gets out of order, and can be brought into operation with the utmost despatch.

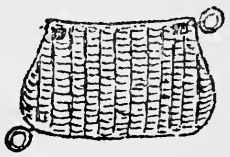

Fig. 1.

Next comes the gear. For dry-fly work, casts need not exceed 5 ft., and another foot may be conceded for wet-fly casts when two flies are mounted. The gut should be of the roundest and soundest, and 2 × tapered to 3 × would be just

* Author of "Wet-Fly Fishing Methodically Treated."

right. Casts on the market are more or less stained. Personally, I prefer quite unstained gut. The stained is as brilliant as the white, though the

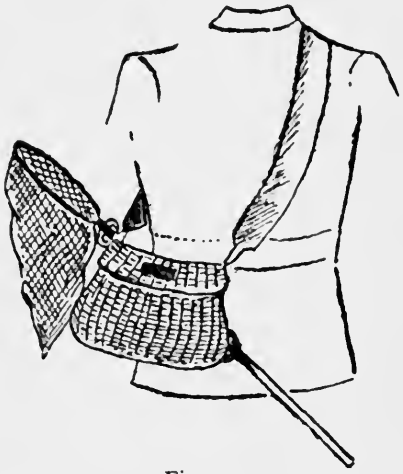

Fig. 2.

glitter of both quickly goes in use. My reason is that, while the stained article looks pretty and seems unnoticeable from above against the dark bottom of a stream, the staining gives it considerable opacity. We must consider that the trout are looking upward, and I incline to think the unstained gut from its transparency is less perceptible against a background of sky. However, as far as the brooks go, I do not hold this

to be a very material matter. As to flies, an extensive repertoire is quite unnecessary. If fishing dry, a few of those commonly used, and to be expected at certain times, will suffice, with a small but efficient assortment of wet patterns. Mega biblion, mega kakon would apply to streams where fly-fishing is, as a rule, much hindered by undergrowth, and other lures are constantly obligatory to get the trout. I shall refer to a few special brook flies later on.

For worm or dapping casts I know nothing better than the extra fine undrawn gut known as 'refinucha,' sold at about 3s. 6d. per hank. (Mr. R. Ramsbottom, 81, Market Street, Manchester, is a specialist in this.) It is stronger than drawn gut, and considerably finer than refina. These casts need never be longer than 4 ft., and one reason is this: It often happens that an exceedingly short line will best fish some difficult spot where, perhaps, low boughs are bending over the water. If a long gut cast were shortened to suit such a place by merely pulling through the top ring the knot which secures it to the reel line, and a hooked fish of size started to run, the knot would stick, and a parting, happy only for the trout, naturally follow. Besides, experience will soon prove that excessive lengths of gut, once

considered indispensable, have very little to do, after all, with successful fishing. I have frequently been obliged to break and shorten a short cast when working the worm in clear water, to negotiate some all but *uncomeatable* sanctuary. As bait-fishing casts will be subject to hard usage, the gut chosen should be as even and round as possible. It is an immense advantage to be able to make up these casts at home and be independent of the dealers, as well as on the score of economy and efficiency. Some tackle is almost sure to be lost or injured in the course of a day's brook-angling, and the man who learns to make his own can sit down at his leisure to repair damages with confidence and satisfaction to himself. A hank (about 100 strands) of refinucha gut may therefore be regarded as a useful asset to the brook-angler.

In the hope that this view may find favour, I would draw attention to a knot for tying strands of gut together which I have never known to slip, and at which the gut is not liable to break, which cannot be said for the single ' fisherman's knot,' which even with the ends re-inserted is not nearly so good as the following. About two inches of the ends of the two strands are laid together, a small loop is made by doubling them

over, as close as possible to the left; this loop is confined by the left thumb and forefinger, and a second similar loop turned over and laid on the first. The end and strand on the right are then put through both loops, and finally the ends and strands at left and right are pulled till the knot is quite tight, and the waste ends are snipped off close. This knot takes a trifle more of the ends of strands to tie, but as one gets used to it less will be needed. Previous to knotting, it is indispensable that the gut should be soaked in tepid water for fifteen minutes. In knotting strands of gut together it is most advisable to tie thick end to thick end, and thin to thin, since a disparity in size of the ends to be secured together would be apt to cause the weaker gut to break under strain, even with this knot. Should this knot require to be made at the waterside, the ends can be thoroughly moistened in the mouth. Traces for minnow spinning need not exceed 4 ft. and are better made of good refina gut. Mounted with two small swivels—brass or German silver swivels do not rust like steel—they can be had from any dealer at 6d. each. I shall refer to minnow hook tackle elsewhere. It will be convenient here to mention the hooks for worm-fishing and dapping, and the method of securing them to the gut, for if

the fisherman makes up his own casts at home, it is most desirable to complete them. For both hooking and holding I think there are no hooks

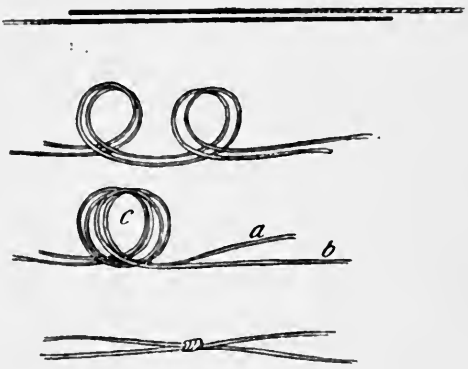

Fig. 3.

2. The two loops could be made one over the other in practice.
3. A and B are pushed through C.
4. Shows the angler's knot completed.

equal to the ' model-perfect,' retailed at 5d. per dozen. They are wide in the gape, well barbed and sharpened, and can be had with extremely short shanks which are less likely to be felt by a shy-biting fish. I am convinced that Pennell (two-hook) tackle suits both the above modes of fishing best. The Stewart (three-hook) worm-tackle has its votaries, but while it does not fasten fish better, it has the objections of unduly

stretching a small worm, of having an extra hook to catch in snags, etc., which, if lost, spoils that tackle, and it gives more trouble in disengaging fish. With regard to the Pennell tackle, I think the dealers, generally, have the hooks too far apart, and often the hooks themselves too large. My own experience leads me to tie them exactly $\frac{3}{4}$ in. from barb to barb, and this rarely misses a fish. For double-hook dap tackle the hooks should be quite close, one immediately above the other. Tying the hooks to the gut is a much better plan than knotting to eyed hooks, as many do. It gives a certain stiffness to this tackle which the knotting lacks, and in my opinion assists hooking better, besides being a safer adjustment. To tie on hooks is a simple matter. About 7 in. of very fine pink tying silk is knotted to a pin run through the trouser above the knee. Holding the end tight, this is well waxed with colourless wax

Fig. 4.

1.
For worm.

2.
For dapping; shot between hooks.

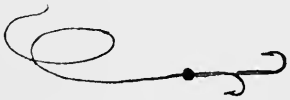

Fig. 5.
3. For dapping, showing small shot.

and cut from the pin, a method of waxing which saves constant breaking of the silk. The first lap is put round the extreme top of the hook-shank, bare, which with the ends of gut are then laid together and lapped as evenly and tightly as possible. After a few laps, it helps security to lap once or twice over the bare hook-shank under the gut, then the lapping is continued to the *end* of the *straight part* of the hook-shank where the silk is fastened by two slip-knots and snipped off. The second hook is then similarly tied, but reversely. A touch of varnish to the tying completes it. No. 16 size of the model-perfect hook corresponds to No. 13 old scale. I find this size equally useful for both worm-fishing and dapping tackle. It is open to question whether shot is required for worming in low water. There are certainly places where it is not, but, speaking generally, it is most advisable. It slows the bait in strong currents, and is invaluable for placing it accurately, especially in wind. It can be removed at fishing-spots I shall refer to later, but as a general rule I consider it indispensable.

For worm tackle I always have one pellet of No. 4 shot pinched on 5 in. above the hooks. Shot is also necessary in some modes of dapping, which will be referred to. A tiny box of mixed split

shot costs 1d., and with a pliers for pinching on (6d.), can be carried in the waistcoat pocket.

The angler can please himself as regards a creel or a bag for his fish. The first is more apt to swing over than a bag when stooping, but is cooler, and seems to keep fish in better condition. When you notice either receptacle crammed with angling paraphernalia and luncheon, it strikes you that the wearer does not anticipate filling it with trout. A bag usually has partitions, but a creel should be taken to the stream empty save for

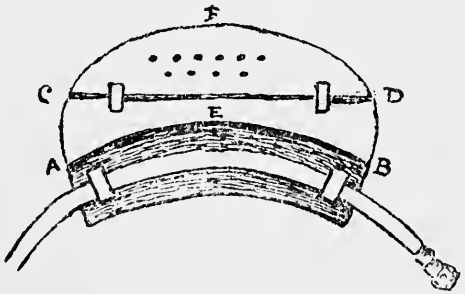

Fig. 6.
Convex length, A F B, 10½ in. Concave length, A to B, 6¾ in. Greatest breadth, E to F, 2 in. C to D where cover opens on hinges. At back see two clasps through which the leather strap is slipped which secures the tin to the waist. Air-holes are punctured in cover.

some wild thyme or short sweet grass at the bottom. A small canvas bag can be taken for

holding lunch, etc. For carriage of worms, a tin worn on a strap around the waist is ever so much more convenient than a bag. My own, a product of Kerry, has seen over thirty years' service, and is as good as ever. The lid opens by hinges, and it can be most readily manipulated with the left hand, the worms turned over and one selected without trouble. A little damped moss is laid at the bottom. For live flies, small perforated zinc bottles and tins are sold (about 6d.), but a fairly efficient substitute is a 6 oz. medicine bottle the cork of which has side grooves cut to admit air. Gentles can be carried in a small flat tobacco-box with some bran or sand.

The next essential to mention are waders. Brooks have constantly to be crossed and re-crossed, besides which getting into the water is often absolutely necessary. Nor need it be imagined that ordinary waders are too long; there will be many places over 3 ft. in depth. Waders, too, obviate the necessity for knee-pads, otherwise indispensable.

Though dry flies are best taken in a case—I must not forget the oil-bottle—a little cardboard box answers quite well enough. Most useful is a general tackle book. In addition to wet flies, it

holds casts of all sorts, a few 3 × points for flies, an artificial minnow or two, scissors, a tiny file for sharpening hooks, a darning-needle for undoing tangled gut, spare hook lengths and some wax-end in case of a broken rod, one's licence, permits, etc.

Finally, a word about clothing. This should be, as far as possible, in harmony with the surroundings so as to be inconspicuous. Drab burberrys, or tweeds of some plain neutral colour, help concealment, with a soft hat or cap of the same; straw headgear and white collars are better discarded.

I believe I have now enumerated almost all the necessaries of the brook-fisherman, and it is time to get to work, but I must first draw attention to a few preliminary matters.

By the way, it is as well to be assured of the presence of fish in the brook to be experimented upon. Some twenty years ago, when at Ross (Herefordshire), I noticed a most enticing little stream which joined the Wye. It looked promising, and I persuaded a non-angler to come and watch me put a basket together. I fished that brook for all I was worth. Each little stickle and pool looked better than the last, but not a single trout got into the creel. To say that I was utterly puzzled or disgusted would not express

my feelings. My friend, who at first was all expectancy, gradually discounted my qualifications, and I noticed that idiotic grin which we anglers know so well, and loathe, stealing over his features. Fly, worm, Devon, all appeared equally useless ; not a solitary rise or bite did I get. The mystery was not solved until we reached a mill and the miller. " Is this stream very much fished ? " said I to that dusty gentleman. " I can't make it out, but I haven't stirred a fish." " I reckon you ain't, mister," returned he coolly, " 'cos there ain't none in it. They was all poisoned two years agone."

III: PRELIMINARY NOTES

THERE are three keys to successful brook-fishing. The first, which deserves capital letters, is, WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP OUT OF SIGHT OF THE FISH, with, as a corollary, spare no pains in doing so. The second is the studying of the most affording parts in varied conditions of the water; and the third includes the choice of lures, and their treatment in fishing.

It cannot be too strongly impressed on the novice that a trout which sees the angler is not to be caught, and the axiom that when the angler can see the trout they can see him may, in a general sense, be accepted. No more timorous fish swims, and, according to Mr. Fred Shaw, they can see from a point right ahead to an angle of 60 degrees behind each shoulder. If this theory, applied to rivers, be true, how much more does it concern the narrow waters under discussion!

One matter, however, is beyond all doubt. Trout invariably lie in running water with their

noses pointed against the current, and therefore whatever general chance of concealment there may be rests in fishing from behind them. The moral is that the brook-angler must both walk and fish upstream. This point realised, a considerable step has been gained. And what if he wants to fish the same water back? I reply that he should note the places he has already fished up, select such as he wishes to try again on the journey down, approach them by small detours, and deal with them as in the first instance.

Now, something must be said concerning approaches, which is a matter of very special importance. Many a man who persists in keeping to the upright position as he works up one of these little streams is surprised at his lack of success, not understanding that he has scared whatever fish were in his vicinity, save perhaps a few under the near bank. Very likely he condemns the place; says there are no trout in it, and tells other anglers it is not worth trying. Still, standing is not entirely taboo, especially with an old hand. Wherever brambles, bushes, flaggers, etc., form a sufficient screen, it is safe, with judgment, but even then the posture should be more or less stooping, and sufficient distance from the edge observed.

There is a peculiar slanting view of the water indispensable for all brook operations which can be readily acquired by exercising ordinary intelligence. For instance, by standing well back, one perceives, as it were, only *the surface* of a run, etc., and by kneeling, and keeping the rest of the body as low as can be managed, one can move nearer with a similar effect. This has only to be tried to be understood, and that proximity to the water which may be considered safe will be quickly realised. I have laid particular stress on this manner of approach. It is half the battle, and, once mastered, the various tactics of actual fishing will follow with ever-growing experience.

In fishing any spot, the angler, looking up, will be able to select the next place for going to work, and instead of walking along the edge to it will keep back, and approach the desired water on the knees if there be no screen for concealment. This may seem to be an ultra-cautious procedure which entails a considerable amount of trouble and discomfort, but I earnestly desire to impress on those who undertake brooks that it is a primary factor in successful fishing.

Then, the position of the sun calls for special consideration. If any of the shadow of the angler be thrown on the water, goodbye to all chance of

catching trout there ; they seek hiding-places at once. This is well known to fishers of rivers, and how much more does it affect success in a narrow stream ! Without bothering about the solar system or the earth's motion, let me simply say that the sun must be kept in front, or as nearly so as may be, and never be at the rear of the brook artist. It is heart-breaking work to try and dodge a rear sun upon a gradually sloping bank, troublesome anywhere, and next to useless everywhere. The best thing to do when the sun plays upon one side of the stream is to cross over, even if the other side affords fewer spots for going to work.

There are sure to be mills on a brook, or one mill, anyhow, and mills require leats or feeders for their wheels. A portion of the stream is therefore deleted, and brought down an artificial channel to work the mill. This is an unavoidable nuisance, and if the mill be not working and waiting till its leat fills up, miles of water below will be doubly low in summer. But when the wheel begins to work, the fisherman below had better look out, for the liberated water rushing down carries many dainties with it. The trout know this, and commence to feed straightaway. The leats themselves hold more or less trout, which

have worked down. Some are better than others, especially such as are deep and still above the mill, but many of them would not repay fishing.

The next point is the brook itself. In early spring, say March, a month which I would gladly see prohibited by law for trout-fishing, there is, in normal conditions, plenty of water down. Stickles, glides and pools will, though full, be well defined, and the whereabouts of the trout more easily ascertained than at any other time. They are now recuperating after their spawning operations, and though weakened by this and other natural causes, are sufficiently recruited to be able to contend with all moderately-flowing runs, in which they shake off parasites, pick up food, and gradually gain strength and condition. How often does one read of catches made in March said to be in excellent condition! I have never known this to be the case, and it would be rather surprising if it were true. All violent rushes and torrents, and still deeps, which will all be harbourages later on, may now be passed over, and attention concentrated on the tails of rapid runs (termed ' the hang ' in Scotland), all glides, and the broken water of easy flow and moderate depth. From April, with increasing strength, the trout are working into stronger currents, and the

larger ones are taking up their positions ; for in brooks, at all events, each fish of fair size has its own little domain from which it jealously excludes its fellows and seldom wanders far. From May every part of the stream will be more or less populated, save the extremely attenuated places, *i.e.*, where with extra width the water scarcely covers the pebbles. Such places may be always skipped. When a trout is taken from its holt, its place, like our own, is quickly filled up, and this is so far interesting in that a fish hooked and lost in any particular spot can be reckoned with on a future occasion. But the various features of a brook call for more special attention than a few general remarks, and will be included in connection with the different forms of fishing it.

My third point, lures and their treatment, will be similarly dealt with, with but slight mention here. While the artificial fly, whether fished dry or wet, holds pride of place as the most sporting of all lures, the *pièce de résistance* of the brook-fisher will be the clear-water worm. As far as these little streams are concerned, the scientific use of this natural and most useful bait appears to me to be a more difficult art to master than any other description of trout-fishing ; but once acquired, even in fair degree, it will upset all

theories as to the simplicity of beguiling trout with worms, and, I think, have a fascination for the performer which will only end when he ceases to use his rod. It must be taken into account that comparatively few parts of a pastoral brook are open to the artificial fly. Overhanging trees, growths of bush, high weeds, brambles arching into the stream, etc., constantly interfere with the fly-man's craft, and, were he restricted to its use alone, he must inevitably pass over many of the most likely spots and surest haunts for good fish. This does not obtain, in any marked degree, on moorland streams, which, by contrast, are quite open, but even here the worm will often score when fly-fishing yields but poor results. A third and extremely remunerative method of fishing during the hot months is dapping with live insects, and the fourth and last bait necessary for me to deal with is the natural and the artificial minnow. I should not recommend the brook-angler to start intent on trying one lure alone. There are days when the shrewdest presentment of the worm would be only waste of time and energy, and the same applies to fly-fishing. But the resourceful fisherman will not admit of defeat. Beaten in one direction, there are other avenues open, and even on non-taking days one or other of the

enticements mentioned will most probably help him to a few fish. The weather has a great deal to do with it, trout being extremely sensitive to meteorological changes. A continuance of bright, windy, dry weather with a low temperature is generally unfavourable. Then there are what are called 'pet days,' when the utmost ingenuity must be exercised to catch a brace or two. Such are calm, bright, quite delightful days, when one's wife is most likely to say, "What a lovely day for fishing!" A deluge usually succeeds one of these, which naturally accounts for the apathy of the trout. Violent changes, too, with unsettled weather, are unfavourable conditions, as when, after a fine spell, a heavy wind gets up with drenching rain for the day, trout are sure to be 'off'; they are expecting a rise of water yet to come on, and, except for a few undersized troutlings here and there, they are not to be tempted. The rise and fall of freshets affect both the take and the lure.

What, then, is the best time to go a-brook-fishing?

So far as I know, granted the water to be at normal height for spring or summer, it is: (1) a cloudy day with rather high temperature, a light S. or S.W. wind and a thick mist; (2) a calm day

with alternate cloud and sun, a high temperature and heavy recurrent showers ; (3) warmish, mild, settled grey weather with S., S.W. or W. breeze, and (4) a sunny, broiling summer day. At all these times, pet days excluded, trout will take for a longer or shorter period at some hour of the day, and it is then that the watchful angler will make his harvest.

I went to a very small brook at Tuckenhay (Devon) one beautiful June day, but, try all I could, I had to confess failure ; not a fish would budge. About 2 p.m. heavy clouds piled up, and a tremendous thunderstorm with a downpour of rain came on. There was no shelter to be had, so I fished right through it. The effect upon the trout seemed magical. Their lethargy departed, and, as if galvanised to life, they took the worm so greedily that when the storm subsided a heavy pannier averaging quite three to the pound rewarded me for daring the elements. This was, of course, a mere temporary change.

As regards the time of day in connection with takes, 10 a.m. is an excellent hour to start fly-fishing in spring, and trout then usually go off the feed about 3 p.m., if not earlier. Moreover, general rises are at that period rather capricious and *carpe diem* is a good watchword when trout

are in the humour. It is impossible to lay down any settled rule for summer, since hatches of fly may come up at any hour, and with them a rise. But towards sunset, and after, many insects assume the sub-imago stage, and with the ascending nymphæ invite the fish to hold their usual evening carnival, when good sport, while it lasts, is very probable. At no time will the C.W. worm be taken better than during the very early morning, but this would demand exceptional energy. Eight or nine o'clock is a good average hour to commence, and it will be noticed that, as a rule, whatever take there may be, it is apt to go off about 3 p.m., but again come on as dusk approaches.

There are a few common-knowledge matters which may as well find room in these notes. Most of them are well known to the average trout-fisherman, but an angling work would seem to me incomplete without giving them some slight attention. The first of these is about leaping fish. When a hooked trout jumps clear out of water it is idle to theorise concerning its direction, from or towards the fisherman, and changes of method. The thing is so sudden and unexpected that there is not a moment for deliberation. Simultaneously with the leap, lower the tip of the

rod to the surface, rather towards the fish. The reason usually given is that the fish tries to break the controlling line with its tail, which would be quite possible unless it was immediately relaxed, but I think that if the rod-point were not lowered there would be sufficient tension as the fish fell back to either break the hold or snap the gut. It is well to be always prepared for this emergency so that the point may be lowered INSTANTLY; once the trout is again under water the strain is continued. Another matter is the objectionable habit of yanking out fish, struck and hooked, and this especially applies to brooks. One may lose the trout of the day by so doing. A good one cannot be distinguished from a quarter-pounder while biting at a worm, and fine gut has its limits. When the lifting impulse is present, the sudden muscular action can hardly be stayed, and disaster often follows. I was impatiently doing this on the Hems, a small Dart tributary near Totnes, and got my lesson. I essayed to yank out a gentle biter, and the head and shoulders of a fine sea-trout came over water as the trace went smash. The less said about my language the better. Whenever a trout is hooked, then, feel it first, and see what you have to deal with. If impossible to use the net, a very common

contingency, only lift the fish very gingerly when *quite exhausted*, and, if too large to attempt this safely, lay down the rod and get into the stream somehow with the net.

My friend Mr. E. Distin,* of Totnes, a most expert angler, was worm-fishing a long deep pool on the Harbourne brook at Harbertonford (Devon) late one summer evening, and got hold of a good brown trout. A low thorn hedge, over which he was fishing, bounded this pool, and forbade the use of the net. But the place was too deep to get into. As the trout, played out, lay on the surface, the fisherman realised that his top-joint would certainly go if he tried to lift. It was a problem. A happy thought struck him, and, shortening his hand-grip, he took out the top and let it hang, and, having sound gut, just managed to raise his fish over the hedge with the two lower joints. I saw the prize next morning, which scaled $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

So much for resource.

When one reads about netting fish, the first usual injunction is to reel up line. This is all very well, but it can be overdone. In the act of using the landing-net the rod is held back over the

* Mr. Distin has given me leave to use his name.

right shoulder, and by reeling in too short the trout could not be brought within reach. It takes a sufficiency of line to do the last, as anyone can see for themselves by practising at a ball placed on dead water within reach of the net. In brooks I have constantly been obliged to let out line for this operation. For the rest, every angler knows, or ought to know, that the net must be held steady, with half the ring submerged, till the head and shoulders of the fish are over it. The net is then promptly lifted, but without undue haste. It is an *adagio* movement. A trout is sure to be scared by having the net thrust at it, and will often escape in a final struggle if caution and coolness are not exercised. Another piece of advice commonly given is to bring a hooked trout downstream, as quickly as possible, to drown it. It is quite necessary to bring it down to avoid alarming others in unfished water above, but the drowning process is ten times more certain when, having got your fish below you, you drag it to net against the current. Nothing paralyses a hooked trout more, always provided that its open mouth is kept just over the surface. But, taking the current into consideration, this could not be attempted with a large fish. In brooks, especially, many trout will be hooked below the angler who

will remember the above. I have to add that no attempt should be made to net a trout until it is thoroughly exhausted. In playing a good brook trout it is important to allow it as little line as possible. To quote Francis Francis, "Give it out as if it cost a guinea a yard"; the obvious reason being that so innumerable are the obstacles, as old stumps, drooping briars, roots, etc., for which the trout is sure to make, letting him go, as in a river, would in a confined stream court disaster. To obviate this, as far as may be, it is well to walk down and keep up a steady strain, following the fish and trying to keep it in hand by butting it away from danger-points. In doing this, I always keep the left hand on the reel line, pulling in or letting go line as occasion demands, which I prefer to reel work, but I may not recommend it, though I find it a convenient plan.

Although I said in my introduction that trout of 4 oz. are quite common, it is equally true that a vast number under this weight will be hooked even in meadowland brooks; a remark which, by the way, also applies to many rivers. But, compared with the latter, it is hardly necessary to say that a brook, with its small limits, cannot produce fish-life to anything like the same extent,

and that, therefore, whether it be preserved or free, anglers should be most scrupulous with regard to unnecessarily depleting its store of fish. There is little kudos to be gained by a display of little three-ouncers or less, nor in the boast of some men that they killed seventy or eighty trout of a day in a brook. Such babies, if promptly put back unscathed, are bound to grow into worthier quarry, and this wanton destruction not only spells ruin to a small stream, but is unfair to both the conscientious fisherman and the riparian owner. Moreover, it is a fact that sundry anglers who have been discovered in this discreditable work, or in being unduly avaricious for spoil on preserved water, have been disagreeably surprised by having their leave forfeited. It is also injudicious to make too many applications for permits when these are necessary, a matter which has frequently led to a like result.

I venture to offer these remarks in all sincerity, wishful to offend none, but with all friendly anxiety for the welfare of the brooks and the benefit of those who seek them.

IV: DRY FLY

I SHALL assume that the angler can cast sufficiently well enough to be able to place a fly at the end of his gut collar where he pleases in ordinary conditions, an adverse violent wind, of course, excepted. Also that he is a fair judge of distance, and knows that if he wants his fly to fall like thistle-down he must aim, not *at* the water, but at an imaginary spot a little *over* it from which the extended gut and fly drop gently to the surface. Casting is a wrist and forearm action, and in making the forward switch the rod is stopped, to put it simply, when it makes an angle of about 40 degrees with the horizon; but the line travels on, and as it extends the rod-point is lowered and given a slight push forward or a similar draw back as suits the place.

A dry fly must be placed as accurately as possible, and if anything will teach accuracy in casting it will be this same brook-fishing, where brambles, branches and weeds demand the fisherman's unceasing attention to elude them skilfully. Owing to the narrow limits of brooks

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A DRY-FLY CAST JUST COMPLETED

and the many obstacles to be encountered, the exponent of the dry insect is even more handicapped than his wet-fly brother, and there will be no scope for lengthy deliveries as in river-fishing. That it will be cramped work goes without speaking, and the very difficulties that beset one make success doubly agreeable.

Undoubtedly the more open waters of the moorland brooks offer better chances for indulging in this, the most interesting form of fishing the artificial fly, than do the bush-encumbered reaches of an ordinary English stream. Nevertheless, although innumerable strongholds must necessarily be passed over on account of the frequent impenetrable labyrinths of foliage, there will here and there be stretches, some very short and others longer, where it will be quite possible to fish in the orthodox manner, though within confined limits. These places vary in character, and comprise moderately-flowing stickles, well-broken pools beneath cascades, flats with the faintest of currents, deepish narrows moving slowly, shallowish rippling runs, a series of short runs broken by big stones, etc., nor must I forget an occasional few yards of swift narrow currents between blackberry bushes where casting must be accurate indeed. The fisherman, working

up-stream, can pick and choose for himself, and he will soon acquire a full knowledge of his limitations.

Where a brook is well known, the parts lending themselves to dry-fly work are of course readily picked up. But the difficulties of environment only give a certain zest to one's operations, and the tactics necessary to stalk and cover a riser that persists in putting up his neb within two inches of a dog-rose shoot puts a man upon his mettle.

It is rare to see much of a general rise of trout in brooks as compared with wider waters, but at times there is sure to be sufficient for the purpose. The casting will be with a comparatively short line, but what of that? It is dry-fly craft in miniature, and if the artist be not out for big game, and can content himself with what the brook has to offer, I think that the very ingenuity he will be obliged to exercise, together with the continual changes of the water, will only add to the attractions of his fishing. It is only of late years that the more rapid brooks of the mountain and moor have been exploited by the dry-fly man, yet even here he has conclusively proved that his lure will kill trout in low summer water when wet fly would avail little. As I have

already stated, such streams are characteristically open, and the stalking procedure and casting far less impeded. With a very high, though sufficiently clear water, some parts have to be passed by even here on account of the excessive rapidity and turbulent nature of the rushes which, subdivided into separate currents by boulders, would either sink the fly or carry it down too quickly to be noticed. Hence, a lower level is much preferable, for then the usual tactics with equivalent concealment from view are most likely to succeed. Even in the small waters of a hot July a fair basket can be made with care. Still, if the brook be running high, whether clear or slightly tinted, there are numerous quiet glides where with even a full volume of water the floater will score when fish are taking surface flies.

And what are these tactics?

Should any fisherman who has yet to yield to their fascination have waded with me thus far, the little knowledge I possess is at his service.

Imprimis, only one fly is used in dry-fly fishing. In the next place, as a dry fly is to be represented to the trout as a living insect floating naturally down with the current, the imitation of the particular fly upon which they appear to be feeding must be as perfect as the fly-dresser's material

and skill will permit. When there is an obvious rise on at some natural fly whose copy we wish to present, the first thing to do is to catch one for inspection, and this can be done by means of the landing-net, or even with a twig or by hand. The selection from the fly-box will be the nearest possible imitation, especially in point of general colour. The artificial is knotted—never looped—to the end of the cast. The principal difference between a dry and a wet fly is that in the first the wings are well split apart to assist cocking it in a natural position upon the surface, and to further help in this the hackle is wound on more thickly than would suit a wet pattern. I may here mention that ordinary buzz-tied flies, *i.e.*, hackled, but not winged, can also be used with good effect. The method of fishing dry fly may be briefly summed up as follows.

The wings and hackle (or, if wingless, the hackle) are very lightly touched with the oiled brush which is run through the cork of the little odourless paraffin bottles sold, and two or three yards of the reel-line are also rubbed with the oil, or deer's fat, vaseline, etc. If the fly should be over-oiled the excess can be removed by delicate manipulation with a bit of silk rag or the handkerchief.

The artist is now ready, and looks out for one particular trout rising in a special spot. He then stalks his fish from below with all conceivable caution until within as easy casting distance as possible, commensurate with concealment from the trout's view. With an eye for obstacles about, he will deliver his cast *upstream* so as to place the fly, which should drop like a snowflake, about one foot just above where the rise was last noticed. Since the ripples of a rise are sure to be carried downstream in currents, and the exact spot, therefore, liable to be missed, it is as well to mark the rising-place by some object on the bank, as a certain weed, etc. In casting thus it is necessary so to regulate the length of line that a very little more of it is allowed out than is actually needed to place the fly. A slight draw-in of the point of the rod on the completion of the cast and before the fly falls will help to set things right. For if the length of the line cast was only just sufficient to reach the desired spot, what is termed ' drag ' might result, and this is fatal to successful deception. ' Drag ' simply means any unnaturally rapid motion of the fly across the stream caused by the sagging of the line.

Once the fly falls no motion whatever is given it ; it simply floats down over where the trout

has been marked with whatever current there may be. Bearing in mind that fly, gut-collar and line are all coming down towards the fisherman's position, the rod-point is raised as the fly cocks and commences to descend, and slack line is taken in by the left hand between the reel and the first ring to obviate coils in the water and preserve as near an approach to touch with a taking fish as may be. This must be done without moving the portion of reel-line floating with the collar as explained *re* drag. If the trout tried for responds, strike promptly though not violently downstream from the wrist. If the fly is refused after travelling a little lower, pick it off, and make a few false casts in the air to dry it, but in a direction contrary to the trout's locality, and try another cast. If still refused, and the trout is not put down, it would be as well to try another pattern, even if entirely unlike the natural flies on the water. So strange are the ways of trout that a fancy fly as Greenwell's Glory or Tup's Indispensable, etc., will occasionally score in defiance of orthodoxy.

When a trout is noticed coming up beneath a bank (termed ' a banker '), if the ground appear safe, drop your fly thereon and pull it gently in a little above where the rise was seen. I have so

far assumed that the fish are unmistakably surface-feeding. In the event of an absence of natural rises, dry flies can still be used, but instead of placing them before individual fish they may be cast upstream over every practicable part and place which appears likely water, and will be treated in exactly the same way as already described.

From the environment of a lowland brook, with its bushed and brambled banks and narrow waters, it will be evident that dry-fly fishing will be considerably handicapped ; still, even with the disadvantages mentioned, it can assuredly be tried in favouring parts of a brook with good results. Practice will soon ensure the placing of a fly in the narrowest of unencumbered runs. As several sorts of natural fly may have to be imitated, a variety of patterns should be taken, but as certain well-known flies are almost sure to be in evidence at regular times, varying, perhaps, in some degree according to the temperature, this is not a difficult matter. All dealers of repute have prepared lists of the flies regularly hatching out through the summer months.

At the same time I shall name three flies, to be dressed as Spent gnats—*i.e.*, with the outspread wings forming right-angles with the sides of the

hooks. These are: (1) the common Hare's Lug, hook 'o'; (2) Greenwell's Glory, hook 'o.o.'; (3) Black Gnat, body black floss, wings light snipe, legs a very small black hackle, to be tied on a Model-Perfect hook equivalent to 'o.o.o.' *

* Model-Perfect hooks are differently numbered.

V: WET FLY

THIS, the ordinary method of fly-fishing, is much more general in brook work, and can be pursued from the first day of the season to its close, the spring being, on the whole, the most remunerative period. For when these little streams have fined down to summer level, water suitable in spring will have quite changed in character, and the trout have gained very considerably in experience. I need scarcely recapitulate the parts of a brook where it is possible to fly-fish. The rock-broken currents of a mountain stream which might be prejudicial to the dry fly do not affect the wet one.

In spring fishing, a matter to guard against in casting will be the presence of innumerable fine leafless twigs all about a lowland brook. It is a veritable Scylla and Charybdis, for if the caster escapes hitching in one direction, he is very likely to get hung up in another. All that can be done is to take stock on all sides before starting to cast. If one does get hitched it is advisable to try very gentle means and avoid hard twitching—at first,

anyhow. Wherever possible, for reasons already given, wet flies should be also cast upstream; still, greater latitude may be allowed in this respect than in dry-fly fishing. There are many places—too many—where casting upstream would be out of the question, owing to obstacles. In these, then, defy orthodoxy, and cast anyhow, so that you get the flies in, and humour them down with the current as far as you can safely. In pulling them up, skip the dropper (if using two flies) on the surface, and do this in letting them go down also.

I knew an old poacher in Cornwall who employed high art. At apparently impracticable spots he would take the tail fly in his left hand, and, letting go between boughs, contrive to dodge it into currents; then, raking out a little line by jerking against the stream, down would go his two flies, to be pulled about in various directions till he had fished the place out. He showed me some nice trout one day topped by one of about 10 oz.

But apart from this sleight-of-hand work, there are sure to be plenty of places where flies can be fished, if not upstream, at least down, and there are days even in summer when they will show good sport. On flats of some width, or the broader

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THE AUTHOR FISHING WET-FLY UNDER THE OLD PALING

deep pools, they can be cast across at first, then more up, till thrown directly upstream as in river fishing, and if these be ruffled by a breeze success is almost certain. The most fatal of all times is about the second day after a good freshet when, though still tinted, the stream is subsiding. By that time trout will have had enough of bottom food and be eager for fly again. Places scarcely worth a cast in drought will now be worth trial, and the slightly coloured water aids concealment.

In the early season trout are often engaged with larvæ at bottom, or the pupæ or nymphs just leaving it, and do not show on the surface. In this case it is a good plan to sink the flies well, and move them by short jerks to imitate the nymphs. For this, buzz-tied flies answer best, and the scantier the hackle the better. It is practically useless to fish the extra strong or violent rushes and currents early in spring. Trout are still weak after spawning and winter-flood buffetings, and are rather to be found in the easier and lighter runs and in the lower parts of turbulent pools. Some anglers may not agree with me, but I always think that both dead and deep water is best passed over until spring is well advanced.

In upstream casting very little line is necessary,

and as with dry fly, slack is taken in as the flies come down towards the angler for the same reasons. Moreover, as the strike is made down, the hook is driven into instead of being pulled out of the trout's mouth as so constantly happens in fishing downstream, from the unvarying position of trout in the water. The strike should be made: (1) on the touch of a fish; (2) when a fish breaks the water over where the flies are travelling; and (3) whenever the line suddenly straightens out, which almost certainly means that a fly is seized, even though no touch is felt. In casting downstream, striking is not only unnecessary, but injudicious, since the fish hook themselves if hooked at all. It is sufficient to raise the rod and just tighten the line. By the way, striking, like casting, is a matter for the wrist, never the arm. It is a prompt, decisive, but not violent action, for if too hard a broken cast, a lost fish and unmentionable words surely result. As in dry-fly work, a particular rising fish can be specially cast for in the same way, the only difference being that the fly is slightly under water. Nor is this always a disadvantage; there are occasions when the wet fly is preferably taken. Also, as before mentioned, the tail fly may be lightly cast with good result on a bank or

stone, and gently pulled in. If the spot where it drops be an edge of still (or nearly so) water, it is almost certain to be taken before it is sucked into the current outside. Upstream casts are delivered in quick succession when the flies are being hurried down. On calmer water, too, I should scarcely allow them to dwell, but repeat them in various directions, and certainly jigging the hand-fly on the surface.

It is unwise to keep on pegging away at one spot, even if a trout has been caught there. Depend upon it, the flies have been noticed, and after a couple more casts a little farther up, and still farther up, all fishable places will be the right way to work. I have said it is well to have flats ruffled by wind, but for the major portion of a brook, moor brooks excepted, wind is an objectionable factor, as it makes casting extremely difficult where trappy brambles and branches abound. Of course, wherever open enough, wind, not unreasonably strong, is all right.

Showery weather is nearly always good. One effect of heavy showers is to force numbers of flying insects (imagos) to the water, where they are carried down just beneath the surface in a semi-drowned condition. At these times there is often a splendid take, and the wet-fly man

scores. This is one of the chances of summer: another is the certain take on a falling spate. There are other times, too, when even in very low water trout will feed well; for instance, on a dark, misty day; but their ways are so unaccountable that the unexpected may at any time happen.

The brook-angler should perfect himself in sending his lures under low-growing bushes or foliage. Many spots, so protected, are very favourite haunts. Such casts can be neatly made with a little practice. The rod is held both in the backward and forward movements almost parellel with the ground, and the line shot under by making it travel in a very low plane. In doing this, there cannot, of course, be an aim much over the desired spot as in ordinary casting. Switch-casting, too, is sometimes useful in cramped places. Without withdrawing the flies from the water, the rod is raised, inclining to one side or the other, and doubled over smartly in the required direction. This withdraws flies and line, which by a circular movement fall where intended.

In summer the strongest runs and turbulent spots are all tenanted, and should not be missed. Generally speaking, at about sunset, from May on, especially after a sultry day, trout hold a

special carnival, known as the evening rise, which continues until dark falls, though I have known it to cease abruptly before. It may last for half an hour, perhaps a little more. The fish, at this time, seem to lose much of their cunning, and take freely. It is expedient to single out a convenient bit for this evening fishing where both casting and landing trout will be easy, having due regard to its affording probabilities. As, for instance, a few consecutive open stickles, or a flat with a fall in. Ordinary day flies are sufficient, and a very killing one is a small Coachman tied with *landrail* wing.

The first trout I ever caught with fly were taken on one of these occasions, and from a very small brook indeed, whose one long, deepish flat formed the theatre of this early exploit. Here, a mere boy, I crawled close, armed with a half-crown rod, and never since have I felt such intense excitement. As I watched the little boils of the rising trout in the still water my heart seemed in my mouth. I cast as lightly as I could ; there came a boil to me, and a tug to which I vigorously responded, and out flew my first victim, a 5-ouncer.

Oh, the bliss of that moment ! Another, a little less, followed, then a lull, and then—then I

had a savage tug indeed ; there was a momentary struggle, an unrestrainable muscular effort on my part, and up among the branches of a tree over my head, as if shot from a catapult, went a monstrous trout as it seemed to me. I remember it weighed something over ¾ lb. I could catch no more, but what matter ? I had three beautiful fish, and I was consumed with pride. I turn over many pages to recall this important event, but I can still feel the romance of it all, the warm, scented June evening, the rises, the intense anxiety, the exquisite thrill of the hooked trout, and the happy walk homeward.

I hesitate to recommend any particular flies. As in dry-fly fishing, it is well to imitate whatever natural insect the fish appear to be feeding upon. Again, a fancy fly may work wonders, such as the famous Greenwell's Glory and Tup's Indispensable before mentioned. However, I give a few ordinary patterns below which have often assisted me to a basket of brook trout. For obvious reasons, no more than two flies should be used, and some anglers might call this one too many. Yet I have found the jigging of the dropper very effective, and have frequently caught two trout together. A good rule is to invariably mount at least one gold-ribbed fly in high water.

FLIES (WET)

1. Halfstone (spring). 2. Maxwell's Red (spring). 3. Maxwell's Blue (spring). 4. Pheasant Tail, tied with *brassy-dun* hackle (all the season). 5. Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear, tied with brassy-dun hackle (spring and autumn, or after a summer freshet). 6. The Olive Quills, pale, medium and dark (May to end July). 7. Black Gnat, tied with perfectly flat-lying snipe wing, black floss body and small black hackle (May to end July). 8. Red Quill, tied buzz (summer). 9. Hare's Lug (all the season). 10. Body; yellow floss, tied buzz, with small landrail hackle; good often on hot bright days. For evening work: 11. Coachman with landrail wing, or ordinary white wing. 12. Body, mole's fur ribbed silver wire, tied buzz with smoky blue-dun hackle, tail ditto. To these last may be added the Silver, Orange and Cinnamon Sedges. I may here suggest that Messrs. Peek, 40, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C., tie exquisite wet flies at 2s. per dozen.

A blessing on the man who invented eyed hooks, whose evolution has now reached as near perfection as possible. Of these, I think the best are the Pennell Limerick and the Model-Perfect, and the last have been recently immensely improved

by the eyes being made smaller. I confess to disliking sneck-bend hooks, as I do not believe they either fasten or hold fish so well as the

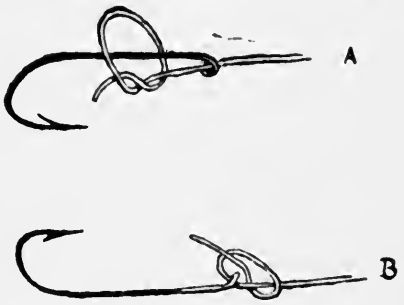


Fig. 7.

Attachment for eyed flies. Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell's 'Half-Hitch Jam Knot.'

Take the fly in the left hand with the eye turned upwards (*see* B). Pass the gut through the eye towards the hook bend, make a half-hitch—or half-knot—and drawing in and tightening the main link with the third and fourth fingers of the right hand, and humouring the gut the while, push with the finger and thumb the 'noose' (which forms itself in the act) over the eye, and pull taut. The knot shown in principle in A will then be found to have practically and perfectly arranged itself round the neck of the eye, which it grips like grim death.

Fig. 8.

A simpler knot. Humour the noose B over the eye, pull taut, and snip off the end C.

straight. The great advantages of eyed hooks are that you can readily attach whatever sized gut

you require, and if a fly be gone at the head, or the gut frayed, a fresh strand can be knotted on in a few moments. In the old fashion, dealers constantly spoiled good flies by tying them to too coarse gut. Besides, a weak spot in the link did for the fly, and the rust from the hook at the head put most flies out of court before their time. The ' Cholmondeley-Pennell ' jam-hitch is one of the best of knots for attaching gut to eyed flies, and a very simple and excellent jam-knot (see diagrams of both) has received favourable mention from the editor of the *Fishing Gazette*, to which I wish to add my own testimony.

VI: CLEAR WATER WORM-FISHING

THERE being not a few fly purists who appear to consider worm-fishing for trout a mere poaching device, and one of so stream-stripping a character as seriously to injure a fishery, besides being prejudicial to the employment of other methods, permit me to quote two out of many authorities.

The first, from the Badminton Library, is as follows: "Clear water worm-fishing has been of late years rescued from a position of obscurity and elevated into one of the recognised branches of scientific angling. . . . An extreme refinement of tackle and niceness of manipulation is required of the successful practitioner in the modern school of worm-fishing." Mr. W. C. Stewart, of well-known trout-fishing fame, says: "Those who despise worm-fishing as a thing as simple as to be quite unworthy of their attention would quickly discover their mistake if brought to a small, clear water on a warm day in June or July."

Very true; let any angler inexperienced in this art try his hand at any time and in any condition

of water, and he would not take long to come to the conclusion that this lure is anything but a destructive agent. The idea may have originated in some vague notion of the deadly efficacy of the worm during spates or in disgust with some fisherman serenely watching his float, provided with an unsavoury but fatal bait used in a lethargic and uninteresting fashion.

How far this prejudice is from fact I hope to be able to show, and, so far as the brooks are concerned, I hold with sufficient reason that to delude trout with worm in the dog-days is one of the most difficult arts in the whole category of angling methods, and demands an amount of knowledge of the habits of the fish with experience in the manipulation of the lure not exceeded in any other form of trout-fishing. Moreover, it is anything but a prosaic sport, and for continual change of water, scenery and manœuvres, as well as its excitement and interest, it deserves a higher plane than it holds on the roll of the trout-fisher's attainments.

That it spoils a water for fly-fishing is a theory which I cannot subscribe to either, since you have a natural and commonplace article of food in which the only deception is the concealed steel contrasted with a highly artificial attempt at a

resemblance of nature. I do not believe that the two clash, or that the fishing with which I now propose to deal reacts in any injurious way upon the sport of the fly-fisherman.

The skilful use of worms in a low and clear water is the bedrock of successful brook-fishing, and there is little room for doubt that if an experienced performer were limited to this one lure throughout the season he would be able to show as good, if not better, results than would be obtained from the use of all others at will. But everything in its season, and I think worm-fishing should not be practised until spring is merging into summer—say from May 1st. During the early months trout appetites, especially for bottom food, are apt to be voracious, and it is scarcely fair to tempt them with a bait which would account for an undue proportion of fish only putting on condition, and for whose capture little credit could be claimed. Spring trout should have a sporting chance, and wet fly is then the legitimate lure by all our canons. In June, July and August, given sultry days, low water and sunny skies, fly-fishing is but too often labour in vain; the garden fly then steps in, and to those who can confidently invoke its assistance a new field of sport is opened up—one, too, that while calling

for the full exercise of piscatory intelligence will not only offer a most pleasing variety to the fisherman, but put good trout into his pannier, which is the main thing when all is said.

With these prefatory remarks, I take up my theme, and as a preliminary to the art of fishing the worm in clear water I must first say something about the worms themselves.

From the days of Charles Cotton, who descants so learnedly upon the virtues of brandlings, these particular worms have been lauded to the angling public by innumerable writers on trout-fishing and by salesmen in such wares as the most satisfactory of their kind for filling the basket. From this view I must entirely dissent. The brandling is, after all, nothing more than an evolution of certain earth-worms induced by residence in and sustenance from material in a state of decomposition. I have watched the process in its various stages. You will find them fully developed in heaps of decayed leaves as well as in dunghills and old tan refuse. My objections to their use may be briefly summed up. Apart from their abominable smell and the impossibility of toughening them by scouring, brandlings are not natural trout food. They are not washed out of the banks as are ordinary earth-worms, and

are, therefore, an unusual presentment, and so liable to be regarded with suspicion. Far be it from me to say that they will not take trout. I should be flying in the face of many high authorities. As a matter of fact, I have killed some thousands of trout with them, but I believe I should have doubled the number by the use of more common products.

My conversion came about like this. On an Irish brook I encountered a coarsely-equipped peasant who was getting several fine sea-trout where I had entirely failed with brandlings. On my showing him my baits, he said, "Yerrah, them things are no use at all, at all, only for little trouts." Again, fishing a brook in spate near its junction with a Killarney river, I was only getting half-hearted nibbles, and now and then a happening small fish, when I chanced on a water bailiff also fishing. It was free water and this man's reputation was great. Well, he showed me his catch, and I got the surprise of my life. Beside three trout of quite the 2 lb., three a little less and at least six over the 1 lb., his capacious creel disclosed other sizeable fish. I complained of my bad luck. "Faith," said he, "you can't expect betther wid them things" (alluding to the brandlings). "See, here's the sort I always

use," and he produced a bag of small blueheads and greyish worms. " Them bramblings isn't a patch on these," he added. " But," I objected, " I've killed heaps of trout with them in clear water." " So you might," he replied, " off and on, and trout will take them in low water whin they're hungry, but these here will make them take in spite of theirselves at any time." As I knew this bailiff, William Carter by name, to be *facile princeps* with the fly as he had proved with the worm, his advice went home. When trout are between moods, especially in low summer water, they are, in my experience, apt to only mince with brandlings, so that only a few fish, hungrier than their fellows, are likely to fall victims, and these will generally be the smaller ones.

I have been prolix on this point because the brandling is so commonly cracked up, and I am anxious that the brook-fisherman, at least, shall provide himself with baits more likely to ensure success. Best of all come the smaller blueheads, chiefly found in old damp road-sidings, but also to be dug up in fields and gardens, though not in any quantity. The head is bluish-black, and the rest somewhat tawny, though occasionally bright pink. Next, in killing properties, come what I

think are called ' marshworms,' very common in garden ground. Some of these are greyish-pink worms ; others, of same colour, have a yellowish or orange knot and are the original form of the brandling. Beyond these two sorts the worm-fisher for trout need not go. A very common garden worm is the squirrel-tail, a dark red worm with a flat tail, but though excellent baits, they are more brittle than the first-named, and do not last well on the hook. The best length of worm for clear water is two and a quarter inches, or as near that length as possible—*i.e.*, in their normal state before extension. It is well to have a depôt or large receptacle at home for storing the main supply. Earthenware answers best, but, failing this, two or three of the largest-sized sweet-tins stocked by grocers do well enough, a few air-holes being drilled through the covers. Receptacles are packed tightly with soft moss, the sort which grows in thick clumps, which is first soaked in cold water and then thoroughly squeezed. About one hundred and fifty worms would be enough for one of these tins. They are laid on the top of

Fig. 9.
Worm baited, actual size.

CLEAR-WATER WORMING IN DEAD, LOW WATER

[*Face p.* 66

IN A GOOD ONE

the packed moss, through which they quickly work down. A little fresh milk poured in occasionally is sufficient food. So disposed, the worms soon become bright, lively and tough, and will live long on the hook. The entire moss should be changed once in every three weeks, or, in very sultry weather, once a fortnight. Meantime, it is well to take out moss and worms now and then, clean out the receptacle, and reverse the position of the contents. If any difficulty arises in procuring fresh moss, the only alternative is to pick out all the worms into a jam-pot, discarding sickly ones (if any) and thoroughly wash the old moss before putting them back. Receptacles should be kept under cover, as heavy rain finding entrance would drown all worms at the bottom, and also kept in a shaded place. In dry summer weather, in addition to gardens, etc., being tilled, it is most difficult to obtain the worms recommended, but they can be always had, post free, from Mr. T. Holmes, 10, Bingley Street, Leeds, at 1s. 6d. per 300 or 2s. per 500. He requires to be cautioned only to send the size recommended.

To bait Pennell tackle, the upper hook is simply stuck into the worm about half an inch below its head ; as the worm will certainly extend

itself in this operation, it is formed into a little bend, and the lower hook is inserted in the same way about an inch or so above the tail. The points of the hooks are sunk in the worm, and it does not matter in the least about the shanks showing. Another way is to insert both hooks in the centre of the worm without bending it. Trout often seize a worm about the middle when they mean business.

And now it is high time to get on to our fishing. The first important matter to be impressed on the novice is to make it a general rule to cast more or less *upstream*, and to lift the bait when it comes down opposite his own position. There are some exceptions to upstream casting which will be explained later. The second matter of consequence I may call the general principle. Let us suppose there to be an open stickle or run, *i.e.*, unencumbered by scrub, etc., of fairly equal depth from bank to bank, a few of which will be found on every brook. The angler takes post a little below the tail-end of such a run, and makes his first cast up into the lower part of the stickle close to his own bank, the next into the centre, and the third under the opposite side. Then, creeping up a yard or so, this process will be repeated, and so on until within casting distance

of the head of the stickle. There five casts may be made, *viz.*, up under the near bank, into the near edge of the main current, into the centre, into the farther edge of the current, and under the opposite bank. Such open stickles will be exceptional, but this procedure indicates the principle referred to. The length of line out (gut and winch-line inclusive) would probably be six or seven feet; perhaps a little more might be required for opposite side casting. These casts are never made overhead. The bait is simply swung backward, then forward to the full extent of the short line, and dropped lightly upon the desired spot. Now, when the bait drops it is not allowed to sink. The rod-point is raised, partly to keep the worm some six inches under the surface, and partly to accompany it on its downward course. The bait coming down with the current quickly becomes vertically under the rod-point, which must maintain that position and keep equal pace with the bait until opposite the fisherman or nearly so. Should the depth of the water appear to vary as from depressions at bottom the worm is less or more raised or sunk on its journey. The rate at which both worm and rod travel will be determined by the strength of the current. On no account should the worm be

hurried or moved downwards in a run more rapidly than the flow carries it; rod-point and bait must travel together *pari passu*, and upon this matter I desire to be emphatic.

The reason for the foregoing method of delivering baits will be obvious. The entire water will be searched, and by first covering fish in the lower parts of a stickle and, if hooked, bringing them downstream, those above will be unlikely to take alarm, considering that they all face the current, as would certainly be the case were the run fished from the head downwards. Moreover, this procedure carries out what I urged in a former chapter concerning the expediency of fishing from behind trout wherever practicable. Suppose one were to work downstream, commencing at the head of a stickle. If he hooked a trout there the splashing and fuss of playing it would inevitably scare other fish which, naturally, are facing up, and as it would be almost impossible for the angler to keep from showing himself, his appearance would complete their rout. The head of a run is not necessarily its most likely spot, tempting though it may look; many trout prefer to lie midway, or even farther down, watching for whatever food the stream may bring. The principle of casting advocated in the foregoing

must in practice constantly be varied to suit the place fished. For instance, it may be impossible to cast under the near or the far bank owing to obstacles, or a shorter or longer line may be expedient. There may be a few wide spots where more line is desirable than can be readily used in the backward swing, in which case, if the fisherman can gauge his distance correctly, the backward swing can be made with a short line, and some slack, held in the left fingers, can be released and shot through the rings as the forward cast straightens out, sufficient to cover the distance.

But the majority of the parts of a brook call for more than passing mention, and may be described as follows. Shallow and deeper stickles of more or less length and moderate speed; stronger confined runs opening out quietly below; pools of broken water with cascades falling in; bank swirls, some of which deepen into pools under foliage on one or both sides; flats of slow motion or occasionally none, formed by depressions or dams; deeps of still water among bushes; separate small stickles where a stream divides; narrow 'guts' moving slowly; quick stickles broken by small depressions; and last, but not least, road-bridge pools. In all of these places obstacles of some sort may be expected,

though, fortunately, they are not always present, and I propose to deal shortly with the fishing of each of them.

In almost all conditions a very short line is used, to be varied according to circumstances. No part at all accessible should be passed over on account of obstacles, for which the eye should always be on the alert, and before undertaking any difficult spot it is well to take stock and use judgment. For instance, weed-stalks and rush-growths project from the edges, blackberry trailers are submerged, snags under water and small twigs carried down by floods and anchored to the bottom are more numerous than desirable, and bushes abound everywhere. Thus, no matter how expert the angler, accidents to tackle are bound to happen, but the watchfulness and ingenuity developed by the necessity of overcoming these hindrances quickly bear fruit, and the fisherman is duly rewarded, for it is very often from some well-defended sanctuary that the best trout of the day are taken.

It is worth mentioning that whenever a hitch-up occurs the very gentlest means should be tried at first. Should a hitch at bottom happen, pull the line lightly against the course of the stream. Some snags are so deeply placed that to get at the

hitch would bring the angler over his waders. When impossible to extricate tackle, and a break is unavoidable, put rod and gear in a straight line and pull. Some of the gut may be saved; anyhow, there is no use wasting time over it.

One general matter may here be impressed upon the novice: Do not allow the bait to sink much in quick water, and keep the rod-point rather high.

Good trout constantly lie in quite shallow runs, especially when shaded by bushes, during the hot months, and in casting under an opposite foliaged bank lower the point of the rod just before the completion of the forward swing, and give it either a push forward or draw it back to shoot the bait under the leaves or avoid getting hung up as the case may be; if nicely timed, the last motions will communicate themselves to the bait. These thin shallows of 5 in. to 6 in. deep should not be hurried over, and are to be fished as in our first principles, allowing, of course, for intervening scrub. In the late evening, when fish are on the move looking for food, such places do well, since trout seeking shade before are now likely to be in the open. Many deepish, easy-going stickles will be noticed. These are, at all times, certain haunts, and are to be worked as much as possible from

tail to head. In fishing confined narrow rushes of rather fast water (having first tried their open-out below), keep the worm in mid-stream only, and cast it upstream as far as can be managed, as it will be hurried down. It will not, however, escape the vision of a fish or two in position at either side. Pools into which cascades fall are very likely places, and some have fair depth with broken, froth-chequered surface and eddying sides. Do not be tempted by the fall: try the tail and near side first, next the centre, and then under the far bank, by degrees up to the fall, the sides of which are more likely to be remunerative than immediately under it. Bank swirls are places where the whole volume of the stream is confined to one side or the other, and they are deepest at the bank edge of whichever side that is. Should the bank be free from obstacles, fish them up gradually from the tail, but instead of first dropping the worm, if at the angler's side, close to that side, try the easier edge of the swirl first, before the deeper water. If the swirl is at the opposite bank, adopt the same tactics. But most of these places are so encumbered by hanging brambles that they demand downstream fishing; but of that later on. In some cases swirls, and, for that matter,

stickles also, deepen into pools under foliage. In such holts look out for a good fish ; try the pool first, afterwards working the bait down whatever current there may be under the leaves, raising and sinking it slightly as it travels. Flats are widish parts, of more or less length where the water is dead, or nearly so, save where the head current runs in. They are caused either by little weirs, dams, or depressions at bottom, and are of varying depth. Should the near side be the deepest part I should try close to it first, from tail to head, otherwise the general procedure would be to remove the shot (by breaking at the knot above it, and re-knotting), and taking care to lie low, cast lightly in various directions, finishing with under the far bank. When the worm falls, give it a sharp drag, and then let it sink to bottom and remain there a short time. Under overhanging bushes flats are always likely places, and near the run-in the usual method is to be followed. Still deeps amongst bushes are often the haunts of good trout. Here drop the bait in with a little ' plump,' let it sink well, and if not immediately seized, sink and draw it slowly. All negotiable parts of such a spot are well worth trial. A brook often divides itself for a short distance. After fishing the waters-meet below, give the two

separate stickles sufficient trial. And this reminds me of the importance of fishing apparently trifling runs under banks, parts of a main stickle, and very apt to be skipped. It is surprising what small depressions trout will lie in during summer, and unexpected luck may result from casting just on top of the little run-in, and allowing the worm to work down these small places. Last season I had a 12½ oz. trout from just such a place. Narrow guts are parts where the brook is extremely confined, yet moving slowly. Fish them up; casting into the centre is sufficient, and raise and sink the worm a little as it travels down. There is often a succession of breaks in a run of inconsiderable depth where small depressions occur. Into these let the bait slide, sinking it a little as it slides over and in.

But it would be too tedious to try to describe all the intricacies of a small stream which suggest worm-fishing; the understanding them can only be gained by experience. A word, however, about road-bridge pools. Under many roads but ordinary quick shallows will be noticed, but occasionally one has the luck to hit on an ideal place of this sort. Such would be a deep (perhaps 2 ft. to 3 ft.), slow, thickish-looking stickle whose easier sides work into eddies off the sides of the

arch. A spot of this description can be worked to a certain extent from below, but I think it is better fished, though downstream fashion, from the head. I have often had trout from these holts of and over the 16 oz. Particular care must be exercised in fishing them. Enter the bait at the top of the run above the bridge, and commence humouring it down with plenty of slack line in the left hand. If a fish is hooked near the top of the run it must be kept, if possible, from getting down and alarming others in the pool. If not, work the bait into the nearer part of the deepening run, and draw it slowly from side to side. Should there be no result, let the worm go on to the extent of the pool, manœuvring it in same way. If at this game one gets a savage sort of grab, raise the rod-point instantly, but without striking; but if a gentle touch be felt, push the rod-point on the moment towards the trout, at the same time easing out some slack line to prevent its feeling any check; give about six seconds' time, and then raise the point similarly. Striking would most probably drag the hooks out of the trout's mouth if the bait had not been taken well in.

I have said nothing hitherto about the biting of trout in worm-fishing and how to deal with it. This is a very important matter. Granted that

they are inclined to take worms, which is by no means always the case, the novice will do well to pay attention to the following, assuming that he has adopted my suggestions as to the manner of casting and manœuvring his bait. Ordinarily speaking, the first indication of a bite will be the sudden stoppage of the descending gut, and its movement a very little up or across stream, accompanied by a *faint* twitching or feeling of life at the end. Both this stoppage and the slight electric touch are sometimes absent, but, as a rule, they will be in evidence. Upon this, realising that he had a bite, the young hand would be likely, from nervous excitement and anxiety, to attempt to yank out the fish, always a most objectionable practice, for your gentlest biter may be the fish of the day, and if the hooks are not dragged out, or perhaps a slight hold broken, a smash-up is the probable result. The expert never does this. Immediately upon the gut stoppage and touch, he lowers the point of his rod and pushes it towards the biting fish, whose movements (if any) he follows with the rod and a slack line for six seconds at least. He then strikes, sharply, though not violently, with *lowered rod* in the downstream direction wherever that is possible. For if at first the trout felt any

strain or resistance—which would scarcely suggest a worm carried down by the current—or was pulled at, it would almost certainly eject the bait on the moment. Should the bite occur at some little distance, in addition to the procedure recommended, a little line pulled off the reel can be eased out to obviate any tension between rod and fish. But the gut will frequently stop without a trout being the cause : the hooks often hitch in stones, weeds, etc. Such stoppages will soon be understood by the absence of any lifelike feeling or movement of the line. At the same time, I have now and then known a trout to take without betraying itself at all. In case of doubt, the best thing to do is to let the line remain quiescent and slack for the time mentioned, and then raise the rod and tighten gently.

In worm-fishing, as with fly, trout are often addicted to the provoking habit of ' taking short,' as it is termed. This means that while indisposed to feed they are yet inclined to play with the bait, and not allow it to pass untouched. Sometimes, without any gut stoppage or previous notice, the rod will suddenly double up, and the fish be gone the next moment. Or a savage grab may be felt, or a trout will dart upstream with the worm (termed ' a runner '), and will promptly

let go on the strike. What they seize and how they disengage in these circumstances is still a matter of conjecture. The off-chance—a poor one—of paying some of them out is to strike like lightning when the angler is sure that this taking short is beyond doubt.

In returning to normal conditions, I have already said that at certain places upstream fishing would be impossible, and very many such parts will be found. For instance, a run unapproachable from below from scrub, etc., may go rippling down beneath bushes, or a bank swirl is often so protected by brambles drooping over as to preclude all idea of fishing up, and other cases may occur. In these circumstances, observing all caution, enter the bait at or as near as possible to the head of the run, and let it go down, slightly undulating the rod-top to prevent it catching on the bottom and to help its travelling. In doing this, pull out some slack and ease out line by degrees. The upper part of such a place should be tried first, and then the worm can be worked down lower and lower. In this manœuvre the bait may be held steady occasionally, and, however paradoxical it may seem, even pulled a little against the current, and let down again. Here the bite may be a hard grab, upon which

tighten instantly, but without striking ; or it may be a gentle touch, when it is expedient to push the rod towards the fish and at once ease out line before tightening in the usual time. Trout facing upstream, as they always are, should never be struck at when fishing downstream.

The brook-fisherman must perforce pass by various attractive spots where from the density of foliage, interlacing twigs or other obstruction it would be impossible to get his bait into the water. Still, in many such sanctuaries an aperture may be noticed which can be utilised thus. With an exceedingly short line, seize the gut at the shot pellet, bend the rod just sufficiently, take good aim, let go, and shoot the bait in. If in one of these holts there is a current, upon entering the worm shove the rod-top under water, and get out some more line by jerking it against the flow so as to enable the bait to work down. How to get the tackle out, or a trout if hooked, must be left to the resource of the angler.

Much has been written about bringing a fish downstream to help drown it, as no doubt it does ; still, this is often impracticable. But suppose the trout to have worked below or be hooked in downstream fishing, nothing has such a paralysing effect as towing it up against the current with its

mouth kept over the surface. This, of course, after the usual give-and-take play.

I have already touched on mills and their leats, which require no further mention.

If a good trout is hooked in an awkward spot where the net cannot be used from the bank, and lifting would be too risky, play it as hard as you dare, and when it is quite exhausted lay the rod down, get into the water somehow, above the place, and carefully and slowly draw it within reach by the line, ready to let go if the trout shows any more fight.

A trout will sometimes dart out from under a bank, seize the bait and race back to its holt to pouch it. Ease off with both rod and line instantly, and strike in the time mentioned. Placing the bait exactly where you wish it to drop, perhaps within an inch of a briar, is only to be managed by practice.

In this fishing it is of the last importance to preserve an absolutely motionless attitude excepting only the action of casting, and, when necessary, manipulating slack line, and the more quietly this is done the better.

Where there are arcades—*i.e.*, foliage meeting overhead—above otherwise fishable water, the angler can try wading upstream very gently,

pitching his bait before him into every little eddy, run or depression, and working it down how he may. To net a fish in this position, the butt of the rod can be rested upon the bank, the rest laid in the water, and the trout brought within reach by the line. Wherever a bed of weed, a shelf of rock or an old log borders a run is likely to be the haunt of a sizeable fish. In most cases of trout-bites the yielding hand, which growing experience of brook worm-fishing will make habitual, teaching it to follow the trout with corresponding quickness, and not allowing the least restraint to be felt, is essential to success.

There are some deep, sluggish brooks, generally well-weeded, with long reaches of dead water. In such it will be sufficient to drop the bait into every available spot under one's own side first, into gaps between weeds, into any open parts and under the other side, and sink and draw it slowly.

Warm, windless days with occasional heavy showers are likely to be favourable, also misty days with a high temperature and a light air from any southerly direction. Again, trout often take the worm well on blazing summer days, but are then nearly certain to go ' off ' as the afternoon wanes, until about sunset. The worst of all

conditions are bright days with a high wind, especially from the N.W.

Bites of immature trout may be detected by the fidgetty, restless way they take. A Cornish angler said to me, "I knows when it's a good 'un; *they bites solid*"—a particularly happy expression.

During very sultry weather the best times to worm fish are the early morning and just after sunset, but a good creel is often to be made between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Attention must be constantly paid to the state of the bait to make certain that both hooks are embedded in the worm, and that it is lively. Worms torn by biting or lifeless should be immediately replaced.

I trust I have now said enough upon this deadly (in good hands) method of summer angling to put the beginner in touch with his fish. Half the battle is very cautious approach, a motionless position, and light upstream casting with a short line, plus observing the directions given about manœuvring the line and dealing with bites.

VII: THE WORM IN SPATES

I AM not sure that I ought to deal with this subject at all. I can almost hear such opprobrious epithets as 'poacher,' 'pot-hunter,' 'no sportsman,' etc., levelled at me for even mentioning it, let alone seeming to encourage such piscatorial perfidy. Yet I am not dismayed. If I sin, I sin in good company, for that famous angler, the late Francis Francis, and many more that I could name, have been brothers in iniquity.

The pros of the matter may be argued as follows. First, a brook is not like a club or association fishery; secondly, there are many unæsthetic anglers who love catching trout anyhow; thirdly, life is short, our angling days are all too few, and where is the use of throwing away an excellent chance of making a good basket? and, fourthly, I am in no doubt that any fisherman unaccustomed to the work may worm fish for all he is worth in a flooded brook, and yet return without his pannier-strap inconveniencing him in the least.

I shall refer only to summer spates, and take them in two forms: the light one in which, after the first cloudiness has passed, the water is only porter-coloured; and the big, turbid flood of pea-soup complexion. The first would be caused by, say ten hours' heavy rain; the second would take about double that quantity. Either of them, granted it comes down when a stream is dead low, is certain to excite more than ordinary appetite in the trout, and equally sure to deliver them a comparatively guileless prey to the unrefined fisherman.

That is, if he knows how to go about it.

And he will not have to complain of insignificant fish. The battle is to the strong, and when the biggest trout in the brook are out for food their small brethren have, mostly, to take a back seat. A moderate spate, with from two to four inches of extra water down, fishes well all through its day. Upon its commencement the trout wake up, the good time which their acute senses foretold is coming fast, and forthwith they take fickle fortune by the hand and begin to feed on the first instalment of worms and slugs washed out of the banks and carried in from drain-trickles. But if the stream grows cloudy with road-washings they are likely to call a halt until the dirt settles

and the water becomes just nicely tinted. Assuming that the flood is a slight one, there will be many more places fishable than in heavy water. For instance, all the very moderately-flowing stickles and glides will hold taking fish, though I should not try the short ones much broken by stones. The quieter parts of the little waterfall pools, all gentle eddies near the banks, all flats and still places, especially in their higher parts where they meet the fag-end of the current, will be good. It is of no use trying rapid or turbulent spots in freshets. The trout which are roving from their old positions like to feed in comfort, and have as little trouble as possible in snatching at the dainties washed down. All the edges of currents are particularly good, but never where the worm would be violently hurried. If it rained again that night, and the porter tint and amount of water was maintained, the next day should also do well, though hardly so well as the first. Should there be no more rain, the spate would quickly run down, and if the stream was clear, though still fairly high on the day after, it would, in my opinion, be useless to try worm; a few happening small trout which had not had quite their share of good things being probably the only catches. One way of working in a small

spate is to take to the water, and walk softly upstream, casting into all the quiet corners and slow-running places before one. The chief trouble of this proceeding is getting the trout into the net.

A big flood is a different thing, though in many respects akin to the other. At first, as the stream rises, the trout commence biting, but as the water increases, and comes down heavily with a plentiful supply of mud, sticks, weeds, etc., they give it up, and seek shelter in the thin, calm sides of broad stickles, pools, under banks, and wherever the water is slack and quiet. Here they remain patiently until the turbid violence of the flood begins to subside, and the mud in the water settles down, not over-inclined to bite, though some would be had in quiet spots, as the slowly-moving flats. Then, the first violence of the spate over, their time comes, and feed they will, and voraciously, all day long. Unlike the moderate freshet, every run will now be practically useless, being in a swollen, hurrying, tumultuous condition. Where, then, are you to angle? The answer is, in the spots mentioned above, only more so. Fish in all the quiet places, or wherever there is just a little motion in the water. Under banks is likely to be profitable. All flats which now will have

slow currents, the sides of pools, the gentle eddies outside main currents, these will be the feeding-grounds, and there you will get bite after bite, and fish after fish—and good ones, too. At the same time, it must not be supposed that little trout have no share in the general conviviality. Unfortunately they have, though they do take a back seat, and the sportsman—if a spate-fisher can be so denominated—will be careful to return all under the $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. if uninjured.

The method of fishing the worm in floods, with due regard to these remarks, is very similar to that in clear water. It may be sunk and raised a little more, and if the place be almost dead water, or very slow, it may be moved about more. Less time need be given to biting fish than in clear water, as they are apt to gorge worms in spates; say two or three seconds before striking. In a light freshet the angler had better lie low, but he need not do so in thick water, and can enjoy the standing position anywhere. The traces are better made of sound refina gut, and the hooks may be a size larger with advantage. Moreover, as there are sure to be undercurrents in most places, it is well to put on two shots (together) to keep the bait down, and to slow it. The day after a big spate will not be nearly so

remunerative, and on the next, with the clearing and falling water, the glutted trout will have nothing to do with worms. Whenever there is a succession of spates the fish get sated, and worm-fishing is likely to be unprofitable.

VIII : DAPPING

DAPPING in brooks is but a distant relation of the popular idea, as dapping on the Irish lakes, etc. Some angling writers affect to consider it a monotonous game, but, believe me, there is plenty of healthy excitement about it, and it will get trout when all other means fail. That some knowledge of fishing with live flies and other insects is extremely useful at times there can be little room for doubt, and to prove my case, allow me to relate the following true tale.

A man whom I shall call B was a very fair performer with the artificial either dry or wet. He was also engaged to be married to a nice and pretty girl who believed in him absolutely—you know the sort of thing. The girl's people wanted a dish of trout for a special occasion, and B was naturally called in. According to his *fiancée*, there never was such a fisherman ; the trout were a dead certainty. A Midland brook was the scene, and B starting on the short railway journey was seen off by his lady-love. He was by no

means sanguine. It was a broiling July day, as his luck would have it, no breeze, and water sure to be dead low. The parting words at the station were like this :

She: " Now, mind you bring back a lot of big, fat ones. What a lovely day you have ! "

He: " H'm, but suppose they won't take? They don't always, you know, especially when it's so hot and bright."

She (enthusiastically): " Oh, *you're* sure to catch them. *You* can do anything," et cetera.

With many misgivings, B got to his brook, and not a rise was to be seen. Trout seemed to have got torpid in the low and heated water, and no pattern had power to tempt them. What was to be done ? Not even a solitary fish found place in the creel, and the worst of all was having to face the dear little soul who trusted him so entirely. At length he flung down his rod in despair (and with most improper language), and having invoked our Lady Nicotiana, was dozing under a hedge when he was suddenly accosted.

" They bain't takin', be 'um, mister ? "

A farmer's yokel was regarding him with the usual idiotic grin.

" No, confound them," he returned sulkily, " and they're not going to. I may as well clear out."

" Wull ye lend Oi the rod a minute, mister ? A wun't hurt 'en."

" Oh, take it, and be hanged ! Much good you'll do with it," was B's ungracious reply.

Half an hour passed, and B, now snoring, was again aroused. The youth was dangling before his astonished gaze four lovely trout, half-pounders or so.

" Eh, what ! Why, how the deuce did you get those ? "

" 'Twur oak-vly, zur ; live 'uns. Yeu come an' have a try."

B then perceived that his fly had been stripped and the hook run through a mottle-winged natural which was feebly kicking in the throes of dissolution.

To cut it short, B got his first lesson in dapping, and caught three nice fish. The boy made up the dozen, and with half-a-crown stuck in his left eye, bade God-speed to a very relieved angler a little later.

His private comment, " They gentry be all vules," was hardly flattering. The young lady's, " Didn't I know he'd catch them ? " might, under the circumstances, have been justly held so.

These oak-flies are to be found on the trunks of trees, principally oaks, or on old palings near

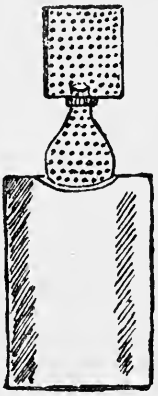
timber, and are easily recognised by their heads being always pointed downwards, but it is troublesome to gather a sufficient quantity of them. Quite as killing is the black wood-fly, swarms of which, in hot weather, collect on fresh cattle-droppings amid woods or in their vicinity. There are three ways of catching them: (1) by lying close to the droppings (provided with a fly-bottle), and when the flies are on thick, making a rapid snatch; (2) by poising a band-box over the same, as a boy's bird-crib, and bringing it down smartly; and (3) to have a small, well-foliaged branch, and stalking a swarm, to strike down suddenly; plenty would be only put temporarily *hors-de-combat* and be fit for use in a short time. If the second plan were tried, the band-box should have a hole through the back in which the neck of the pocket-bottle is inserted. On the capture being effected, the box is rattled, and the flies will make for the light, and so get into the bottle. Next may be mentioned the blowflies produced from gentles, which are almost, if not quite, as deadly as the wood-flies. I am indebted to Mr. E. Distin (Totnes) for a description of his capital contrivance for obtaining a supply of these. He procures a large sweet-tin with a centre-cover. The cover removed, he fits a removable perforated

[*Face p.* 94

A SPOT FOR THE DAP

zinc cone-shaped top to the aperture of the tin, the nozzle of which admits a cork. A quantity of gentles, say those left after a day's fishing, are thrown into the tin with some bran, to be kept in a dark place. In about ten days the gentles will develop into blowflies. When these are required for use, the neck of the pocket-bottle is

1. Perforated zinc pocket fly-bottle.
2. Perforated zinc top to fit into aperture of sweet-tin. It is removable.



3. How the arrangement works.

Fig. 10.—Mr. Distin's arrangement for getting blowflies.

placed over the top of the nozzle, and the arrangement brought into the light, the tin is shaken,

and the flies will go up and fill the pocket carrier. This is a most useful invention.

Also good are common bluebottles, though it might not be easy to procure a sufficient number of them.

As a matter of fact, any large fly or moth found along the banks will kill. Preference must be given, however, to the three first-named.

Besides live flies, it is essential that the dapper should also carry a supply of gentles (stored at home in *sand*, and kept in a cool, dark place) as adjuvants to his flies, and for whatever reason, there can be no doubt of their value.

One No. 8 shot is pinched on exactly at the end of the upper hook-shank, or it can be pinched between the two, which sinks the bait more directly than if placed higher. To bait, run one of the hooks through two flies between the wings, leaving the barb exposed, and put two gentles on the other. The hook is just nicked into the blunt end only of the last.

Appropriate places for this form of dapping will be all dead, deepish spots or any quiet parts with some depth. Overhanging bushes or branches are a great advantage, as they not only afford shelter to trout, but also food in the shape of larvæ and flies dropping down. They also help to screen the

angler, who can present his lure as if it fell naturally from the foliage. There are sure to be places of this sort, especially during the low summer level.

The dapper cannot lie too low nor keep too motionless. He drops in his lure with a very short line, scarcely more than the gut, allows it to sink a foot or so, and then holds steady. The top of the rod will be vertically over the bait. If there is no response very soon the dap may be drawn up a few inches and again sunk. The first intimation of a bite will most likely be a gentle nick, or twitch. I should advise keeping unmoved until a second twitch is felt, and then striking sharply. But if the gut is observed sailing away, strike at once, as the trout will then have the bait fairly in its mouth. Where the water is deep at the near bank it would be well to try there first. The only sort of casting at times expedient is to put the dap farther out, or across, and this is done with the same underhand swing as in worming. Trout seem always especially indignant when hooked on natural flies, and kick up such a fuss that it is of no use trying the same spot again for some little time. In addition to dead water, the very slow eddies and deepish pools may be tried, in which case the rod follows the bait (cast upstream) as it moves

down. The above is a most deadly way of fishing in hot weather.

At times, or rather at favouring spots, the extra careful angler can have the additional excitement of actually seeing a fish taking his bait, the latter being conspicuous under water by the light-coloured maggots. I need scarcely say that his attitude must resemble a statue, and that it would be unadvisable to attempt this without effectual concealment. A small gap through leaves, etc., should be quite sufficient for observation. If a case of this sort comes off, it will be noticed when the dap is taken well into the trout's mouth *re* striking and be a little object-lesson. From my own experience, a trout will swim slowly and doubtfully up to the dap, take a mere taste, and retire as it came. But keep steady. In a moment or two the fish will return and be seen circling about near the tempting morsel. Don't move nor stir the bait. You will see the trout approach more boldly this time, and, unable to resist any longer, take it in and sail away. Then strike at once.

If this sunk method of dapping is over-practised trout grow suspicious, and it is as well to take off the snipe-shot and fish on the surface, when they are sure to take. The flies, etc., are simply

dropped on the water and dibbled—*i.e.*, moved as like a struggling insect as possible—with a very short line. This style requires an extremely well-balanced nervous system, since, in most cases, a sudden dash is made at the dap, and it is very difficult to help responding too quickly and before the trout has got it fairly into its mouth.

For about the first fortnight of June the most fatal of all dapping baits ought to be essayed. This is the green caterpillar to be shaken from the foliage of oaks and elms, more particularly the former, by means of a pole. The caterpillars can be carried in a flat tobacco-tin with a few leaves. This necessitates a changed tackle, and instead of the Pennell, but one hook is used, say a No. 8 Model-Perfect taper shank, and the pellet of No. 8 shot is fixed eight inches above it. Baiting is rather a ticklish job, as if the skin of the caterpillar is burst it would, of course, be useless. It is a good plan to smear the entire hook with a crushed caterpillar, which helps in slipping on one for use. Insert the hook in the centre of the blunt end, and humour the bait carefully to the top of the shank, leaving the barb inside. This most killing dap is fished as before, but plenty of time must be given, six seconds or so, on feeling a touch before striking.

Another method of using the flies and gentles, which can hardly be termed dapping, is all but sure to save the situation on any day. This is to fish them in precisely the same way as the clear-water worm, putting on a No. 4 shot 6 in. or 7 in. above the hooks, and working the stickles, pools, etc., similarly. But as in rough water the flies are very liable to come off, casting should be of the gentlest, and the bait wants constant attention. I should mention one important difference from worming, *viz.*, the strike should be sharp on the instant of a touch or of a momentary stoppage of the gut in fast water.

Having regard to the first method advocated, if for any reason the angler should be unprovided with live flies, he can substitute an artificial Black Palmer (tied on about No. 2 hook, new scale), but one or two gentles on the point of the hook are indispensable, the small shot to be at the head of the fly. This Palmer should have a plain, black body without ribbing. It is not nearly so effective as the living flies, but it often kills well, as I have reason to know.

In the late summer grasshoppers can be easily caught in the meadows, and are a most excellent bait. They take a single hook a size larger than that used for the caterpillar, which is inserted at

the head, run through the body and out near the tail. Grasshoppers can be fished by any of the previous methods.

One more lure deserves mention, and that is the black beetle to be got under, or in, cow-droppings a few days old. Two sorts may be found; one with a reddish belly which is not worth trying, and the entirely black one, to which I refer. This will sometimes do great execution, both in bright, sultry conditions and on warm, cloudy days, but not in windy weather. One hook, the same as for grasshoppers, is used. To bait, holding the beetle in the left fingers, back upwards, by examining the back, a small triangular-shaped mark appears just below the head. Through this mark the hook is inserted, carried through the body, and out at the end of the belly, leaving the bend of the hook exposed. The wing-cases should then be opened, and by blowing under them the wings are made to stand out, which is necessary. The beetle does best under the surface, and a small pellet of shot is advisable a little above the hook. It can be fished, casting upstream, in every description of water, slow or rapid, and will kill trout equally well in shallow runs as in pools or quick stickles. It may be cast, as a worm, into every nook and corner where a trout may be

expected to lie, and the splash with which it often falls is of no consequence.

No more need be said upon this subject, save that dapping is not to be understood as limiting a man to surface-fishing only. During the hot months it affords a not unpleasing interlude to other forms of brook-angling, and it is well worth attention as a method which seldom indeed fails to show sport to the cautious fisherman.

IX: MINNOW-FISHING

FISHING with the minnow, apart from the excitement of runs, has this particular interest, that the lure appeals to the predatory instincts of the larger trout, and should the angler find them favourably disposed—which is not always the case—his dish is likely to be worth inspection.

Trout take the minnow with a sudden dash. At times they may even be seen following a spun bait—I have frequently noticed it—as if uncertain whether to seize it or not. Yet there is a means to end doubt, and, with luck, to hasten the furious struggle that follows a good fish being hooked. This is to give your minnow a momentary quick draw—*from* the hesitating trout.

Minnow-fishing is a form of sport less suited to spring than for a later period, say from May to the end of the season. It seems to do best in the very early morning and at the approach of dusk and after. Still, trout appetites being invariably capricious, no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down, and the afternoons, usually an indifferent

time in the hot months for either fly or worm, are often remunerative, and this can easily be ascertained by a trial.

The best conditions for fishing the minnow are: (1) when a porter-coloured light freshet has reached its height; (2) when a brook still well-tinted is clearing after a bigger freshet; (3) a full, clear water with an upstream breeze to ruffle the surface; and (4) in dead low water, when by cautious work and a different procedure a surprising basket may be made on lucky days.

This branch of angling may come under two heads, *viz.*, with the natural minnow and with its artificial imitation.

The Natural Minnow

I imagine that most fishermen will agree with me that the real article easily ranks first, more particularly in a low and clear water. Moreover, it can be fished in ways barred to the artificial, and worked in little spots often the harbourages of hungry trout where spinning the last would be impracticable. A stiffer rod than a fly-rod is invariably recommended, partly because it seems to meet the question of casting and fastening better; yet, as the brook-angler seldom goes out to spin only, and may frequently change his

lures, the rod originally recommended will, to judge from my own experience, do all that is required.

Preserved minnows are retailed by every tackle-dealer, but I would put in a word of caution about those kept in solutions of formalin. Although this preparation keeps the bait most temptingly brilliant, the temptation is rather to the buyer than to the trout, which, for some reason, appear to detest the smell of this preservative, and in most cases refuse to run at formalined minnows. Steeping them in strong brine for two or three days, or even in coarse salt, does a good deal to obviate this distaste, but for myself, I prefer to have nothing to do with them. Formalin also has the effect of stiffening baits too much. It is a simple matter to catch your own supply. Get a fine-meshed bag-net some $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in width, lightly leaded at bottom, and when a shoal of minnows are noticed in any little shallow creek (not necessarily in a brook), get between them and the main current, and, with extended hands, drag the net towards the shoal and make your haul. Or you may catch plenty with the rod and a tiny hook baited with morsels of worm. Minnows kept, chiefly the smaller ones, should be laid separately out and dried; then placed, also

separately, in rows in common salt, a layer of salt over each row and so on, the whole to be enclosed in a suitable covered wooden box. After a few days the minnows will present a dry, hard, mummified appearance, but this goes off considerably in the water, and so far from objecting, trout are, if anything, partial to salt-preserved minnows. If it is intended to try minnow bait on any day, a few can be taken from the salt the evening before, and let steep the night in cold water, which will soften them and render baiting more easy. Again, if minnows are to be caught in any brook (with hook and worm), they can be readily baited and used fresh on the spot. As to the size, about 2¼ in. long would be right for a high or coloured water, but in a perfectly clear stream at low level minnows should be very small, certainly not over 1½ in.

And first for spinning. Various tackles with flights of hooks, leaded and otherwise, are on the market, some with spinning flanges, which last I should certainly not advise. The following is simpler, and I am convinced it is more effective. A tackle consisting of one large thin-wired hook whose shank from top to beginning of bend equals the length of the minnow from the point of its head to its vent, with one small movable lip-hook

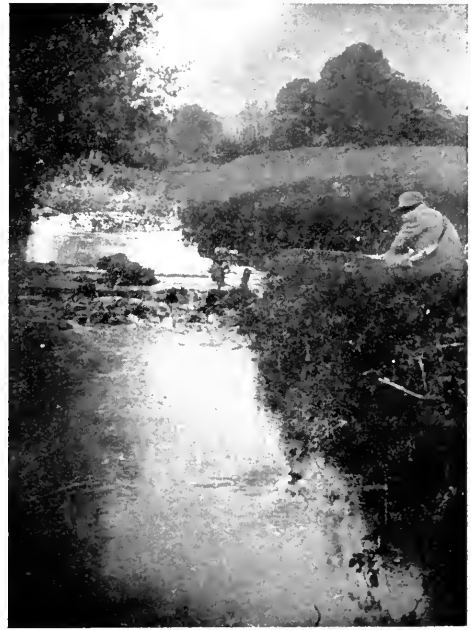
as correctly illustrated in the excellent catalogue of Mr. Cummins, of Bishop Auckland. The large hook is entered at the mouth of the bait, which is humoured up the shank until the hook-point is brought out close to the tail, and at one side, thus giving the curve of the hook to the tail-end of the minnow which causes it to spin ; the lip-hook is then run through both lips. The trace, mounted with two small swivels, is shotted about 9 in. above the hook-tackle just sufficiently to keep the bait a little under water.

All being ready, the *modus operandi* is as follows: Always keeping the left hand on the line to regulate length of casts, as well as to help in working the minnow, the last is swung much in the worming style, but with considerably more force in the swings, across stream to the exact spot desired, and its fall should be as light as is practicable. It should be aimed at a point a little over where it is to drop, and light casting may be aided by a slight draw-in or push-out of the rod-top just as the bait is falling and close to the water. The instant it enters the water it is brought across stream, a little below the fisherman's position, and, if anything, rather against the current, until near the angler's side, working with both the rod and the line, which last is being

shortened in the hand as the bait approaches that side. In doing this, the minnow is moved in little jerks or a succession of short pulls, as if it were really a disabled fish struggling vainly to stem the current. Upon its approaching the near side, reverse the action of the rod, and bring your minnow upstream close to that bank for a short way, finally drawing it a little across stream in this reversed manner. Do not have too taut a line lest a trout seizing the bait should feel any resistance, for assuredly if it does it will let go if it can. And do not attempt to strike in a flurry on getting a run. Whenever you feel the least touch of a fish, *slacken line immediately*. Give it four or five seconds' time, and then drive home the steel, but not violently. Before withdrawing the bait for a fresh cast give it one more little quick draw by pulling in line. This often determines a doubtful trout following it to take hold.

Fishing in this way, the angler commences at the head of a run, trusting for concealment to keeping as far from the edge as may be, and using a fair amount of line as he works downstream. Spinning is rather applicable to a full water than when a brook is run down, but even then there are sure to be many suitable places. Generally

UP-STREAM MINNOW-FISHING



[*Face p.* 108

FISHING THE MINNOW AS A WORM

speaking, the spots to be searched are from the opposite edges of stickles or eddies, near rocks, old tree-roots, under shelving banks, at sluices, or millraces; in short, wherever there is enough current to help spin the bait. It is also as well to try a few casts in the quieter haunts. In rapid water work the minnow slowly, in slow water move it fairly fast. If you can detect a trout following your minnow, pull it away from him suddenly, when in all probability, fearing it may escape, he will pounce on it. But in very low, clear water casting upstream is, on the whole, I think, a better method and less likely to reveal the angler's presence. The minnow is pulled downstream in slow, darting jerks as of a sick fish trying to swim with the current.

And now there is another phase of minnow-fishing to which I would particularly draw the attention of the brook-fisher, one which has nothing to do with spinning; and, provided he is extra cautious in his approaches, there is no more fatal way of using this lure when the water is at low summer level. The trace, without either swivel or sinker, must be fine, say of tapered refinucha gut, which is much stronger than drawn. Baits should not exceed 1½ in. in length, and may be even smaller. Only one hook is

required, and a long-shanked Kendal pattern, size 4 (old scale), would answer well. It is entered at the mouth of the minnow, run through, brought out at the vent, and then slightly caught in the skin at either side. Thus equipped, the fisherman, keeping rigorously out of sight, undershoots his lure *upstream* into every little nook and corner likely to harbour a trout, into the depressions in a broken stickle, bank eddies, under bushes, into all runs from the tail up, into deeps and quiet spots under foliage, and into shallows, except those which are extremely attenuated. In a word, this method is almost identical with clear-water worm-fishing. Shallow runs well bushed often hold sizeable trout. Fish the quieter edges of stickles before trying the main current, and in all flats, or where there is no appreciable flow to hurry the bait allow it to sink to the bottom and rest a few moments. Should nothing then happen, raise it to near the surface, give it a sharp drag, and let it sink again. The chances are that it will attract attention and be pouched. This casting, or undershooting, should be very light and neatly executed, no splash-in of the bait. When a touch is felt, give way instantly by lowering the hand and following the trout's movements with the rod, and, if necessary, easing

out a little line to prevent any chance of resistance or strain being felt by the fish. Give plenty of time before attempting to strike. So much for fishing the natural minnow.

The Artificial Minnow

The names of artificials are legion, and the amateur might well be puzzled in his survey of a dealer's catalogue. To simplify matters, and for all practical brook purposes, I shall confine myself to two patterns, being quite satisfied that if these do not kill no others are likely to do so. These are the small, heavy Silver Devon and a similar Devon made of plain lead uncoloured. No sinker is required with either, as their weight, about $1\frac{7}{8}$ drams (apothecaries measure) is sufficient of itself. Their approximate length would be 1 in. or $1\frac{1}{8}$ in., and should not be more. Devons should commence spinning from the moment they pitch, and as they are constantly worked in rather shallow runs it is important not to let them go to bottom on alighting, as they would be sure to foul on roots or stones. The Devon being an artificial lure necessitates some changes in method from spinning the natural bait. It must be kept ever on the move, and at a slightly quicker rate, since it will not bear any leisurely

examination by the trout. Moreover, it is not worked in jerks, but drawn steadily through the water; at the same time, its pace may often be *momentarily* accelerated with advantage as in connection with what I have suggested *re* natural minnow-spinning. No time can be given when the Devon is seized by a trout, but instead of striking—and this is important—raise the rod and tighten instantly. A Devon is impelled up the trace when attacked, and if the hook tackle is not too stiffly put together there is every chance of a fish getting several hooks into it in its struggles, usually under the throat. I am convinced, too, that Devon tackle fastens fish ever so much better than that arbitrarily fixed to so many artificial spinning lures. Now, as to this same tackle, the flights of trebles usually sold are almost always too large for the bait, even to affect its ready spinning, as well as being too conspicuous. An arrangement which I have found particularly effective, but which is not on the market, consists of having *three* tail trebles, one at the rump of the Devon, the second half an inch beyond that, and the third or final treble half an inch from the second. Two side trebles fit the slot at the shoulder, and all trebles are No. 14 hooks (old scale). This tackle to be tied

—but not stiffly, as with wire—on stout, round refina gut, the lower part single, upper part double ; a very small swivel at the head completes it. My reason for advising single gut for the lower part and absence of all stiffness is that when well moistened this tackle offers no leverage or purchase to a fish to break loose, but, on the contrary, works so as to get more hooks into it. The trebles cannot be kept too sharp. Another excellent tackle substitutes single hooks for trebles, and has recently been very well spoken of for its hooking powers. For one thing, there is far less trouble in disengaging the hooks from a fish, not to mention out of the meshes of one's landing-net, if fouled there, which is almost certain. In this tackle there are two side singles

Fig. 11.
Small minnow baited for spinning.

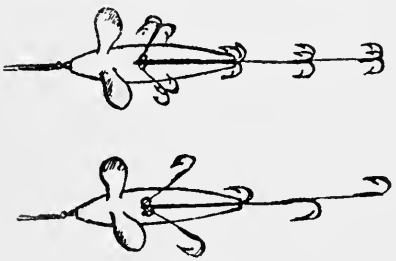


Fig. 12.
Devon tackles.

and three tail ones, the distances between the last as before, to be tied similarly but with larger hooks, say No. 11 (old scale). I cannot pronounce with any certainty as to which of the two Devons recommended is the better killer, possibly the bright one for a coloured water. The dull-looking lead one I have found deadly at times, and a slight scrape of the knife on one side will give it a touch of brilliancy if desired. A couple of these baits carried in the tackle-book, mounted and ready for use, often come in very handily. For instance, when part of a brook has been exploited upstream with fly or worm, the same may be fished down with a Devon, and not unprofitably. Devons are also cast across stream like natural minnows, or they may be thrown directly down, as the particular place appears to favour. They should not be cast upstream, but will work well in dead water if quickly drawn. As to the parts of a brook for their trial, this has already been sufficiently indicated, but such small depressions or nooks where a natural minnow might have a chance of seizure would not for obvious reasons be suitable for an artificial.

In casting both natural and artificial baits for spinning, it is advisable to make the underhand swings with a much shorter line than is necessary

to place them where desired. Two-thirds the length of the rod is quite enough, for if longer the bait would most probably get hitched in weeds, etc. Whatever length is required to enable the bait to reach the exact spot where it is intended to alight can be released by holding a coil or two in the left hand, and letting go with judgment as the bait, impelled by the forward swing, flies out. A little practice will quickly perfect the fisherman in judging his distances accurately so that he can shoot to within an inch of a briar or bush without touching it.

X: SEA-TROUT

ALTHOUGH even Salmo Salar does not disdain the brooks, and are occasionally to be observed, in pairs, busy at their redds amid the gravel-beds of favouring spots, such royal quarry cannot be said to come within the scope of the brook-fisherman. A good second, however, are their cousins the Sea-Trout (*Salmo Trutta*), which certainly do, and though not to be taken in any quantity as common fario may be, their capture is most eagerly sought, and ranks the highest of all rewards which these small waters are capable of affording. For no more beautiful fish swims than a fresh-run sea-trout, plump, small-headed, in the height of condition from marine feeding, its sides gleaming like bars of silver, and picked out rather scantily with dark spots. Game fish are they indeed, and as their mouths are rather tender it needs a cool and practised hand to deal with their violent rushes, acrobatic feats and general liveliness when hooked, and the keen sense of relief one feels when a two-pounder is safely netted must be experienced to be realised.

Sea-trout are known by that term in Scotland when they have passed the grilse stage; in Ireland they are called 'white trout'; in Wales, 'sewen'; and in the south of England, 'peal.'

As an edible, the sea-trout is an extremely 'daynteous fysshe,' as Dame Juliana Berners, with far less reason, styled the carp; the flesh is of a light pink tint and most delicate flavour, especially when cooked soon after capture.

Brooks which discharge their waters directly into the sea, and such as are affluents of tidal rivers, and are themselves affected by the tides, are sure to have a periodical run of these delectable fish during the late summer. Of the former, I consider the best are those which have considerable estuaries, in which, at ebb-tide, an easy-going channel carrying down the fresh water glides along between banks of mud. It may be noted here that it is of no use fishing these channels.

So many opinions have clashed, and still do so in sporting journals *re* early fresh-run sea-trout that I almost hesitate to offer my own. It is, however, shared by numbers of practical anglers of my acquaintance, and is, briefly, that there is no spring run of these fish in England, and that any which come to hand at that time are nothing

more than well-mended kelts tailing down seaward ; further, that the arrival of fresh-run sea-trout is not to be looked for much before the beginning of July. The advance guard will work up, though in small numbers, during a June spate, but the regular concentration upon fresh water is, in my experience, only noticeable from about the time named. As the month of June wanes, and in early July, shoals of sea-trout—for they move in companies—ascend with the flood tides, but, failing extra water in a brook, they mostly tail down again on the ebb, and hang about the mouth of river or brook awaiting a rise of fresh water.

However, the growing impulse of the fish to get up a stream, and find their redds, encourages some of the shoals to work into it on the top of any July spring-tide, no matter how low a brook may be, and, as it may be accepted that they will not move far in the latter conditions, their location can be almost surely fixed. But let the smallest of spates come down, and they are off upstream, as well as many more waiting in the tideway, only to be succeeded by others until mid-September, when the annual run may be said to be over.

Should a freshet come down, upon its

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A SEA-TROUT POOL

subsidence, despite the run up, many sea-trout will be scattered in the reaches of a brook, but their location will be impossible. During the freshet, and after, the yellow trout worm-fisher may have unexpected luck in capturing a happening sea-trout, or more, by following the tactics I have suggested previously; but they are not to be specially angled for as fario, throughout the ordinary waters of the brooks. It is, therefore, to their temporary habitat, when they enter fresh water at low level, or upon the last remains of a spate at vanishing-point, that I would more particularly draw the reader's attention.

In most, if not all, brooks will be noticed at least one quiet, deep and fairly wide pool not far beyond the tidal mark; in some cases one actually covered by a high tide. Here, then, it is that sea-trout rest on their way, and in such a place they are to be looked for with some confidence.

An uncommon instance, where I had capital sport for several seasons, was a deep mill-pond far below the level of the brook, which flowed on for a few yards to the mill-wheel. A slanting stone passage surmounted by hatches at the upper end separated the stream from the pond. When the mill was not working two of the hatches were slightly opened to permit the escape of surplus

water through the pond; in case of a big spate all the hatches were opened, as also from October 1st, to allow the fish to get up. It was an ideal place for sea-trout, as the constantly-ascending shoals quite thronged the pond, from which they had no means of exit upstream unless favoured by a heavy freshet during July, August and September. I mention this since there may be similar spots known to readers who may possibly not have realised their value. The pond in question was one mile from the sea.

Before dealing with the special pool-fishing alluded to I should like to hint that occasional sea-trout are to be taken in the lower parts of tidal brooks during the last hour or so of a flood spring-tide, chiefly at slack water, and in the first hour of the ebb, the said parts being just above a muddy estuary and having the usual environment of field and bush. In such circumstances—say it was top tide at 7 p.m.—I have found ordinary trout-flies to do well, preferably those showing some silver or gold, also a small silver Devon; but best of all, the worms already described, to be fished rather deeply, and carried with whatever movement of water there may be. As very sizeable brown trout delight in this brackish water, and are to be caught, too, the

worm-tackle previously mentioned will answer all purposes.

My principal subject, the fresh-water pool-fishing, is a matter for dusk and night alone. It is only when, after sunset, the gathering shades commence to darken all surroundings that it is judicious to start work, and this would be, roughly speaking, at about 9 p.m. in mid-July. From that time fishing may be continued with the best chances of success until the first approach of dawn, but not after that.

Unquestionably—and I wish to emphasise this point—a *moonless night* is to be preferred.

Before undertaking this fishing it is most advisable to take stock of the pool by daylight with a view to (1) investigation of all obstacles, as bushes, snags, etc., and ascertaining the exact length of line which can be safely used in the dark ; (2) to select a spot where to bring a hooked fish to net, and (3) a general survey of the place, and a favourable position, for the angler need rarely quit a post once taken up.

There are only two lures to be recommended, *viz.*, flies and worms, and the casts for either should be of the *best* light salmon gut *procurable*, say the size known as ' Marana,' and need never exceed 1½ yards in length. In these circumstances

sea-trout are not over-particular, being quite uneducated, and finer gear would only too probably lead to misfortune, as the fisherman would quickly discover if trying conclusions with a three-pound fish making for a snag in the dark.

First for flies, and I shall confine myself to but three patterns, which I have every reason to believe are unbeatable. These are Silver Doctor, Jock Scott and Dusty Miller, and a very nice-sized hook for them is No. 6 ' Down-eyed Improved Limerick ' (old scale). Only one fly should be used at a time for obvious reasons.

From previous scrutiny, the angler will know his limits, and proceeds to cast in every available direction within reach of a necessarily short line, taking care to keep well back from the edge and to preserve as motionless an attitude as possible. The fly is worked in little jerks by undulating the rod rather slowly, and when thrown downstream is brought slowly up in similar manner. The water above, before and below the fisherman's position should be searched and researched most thoroughly. At this time sea-trout do not occupy fixed positions, but wander about, and it is injudicious to shift ground which offers a fair amount of casting because success is delayed. A fly is usually taken in well, and a fish is practically

hooked by its own weight in the turn-down it makes on seizing the lure.

As hooked sea-trout are very energetic in play, and apt to make sudden leaps out of water, the fisherman will do well to keep cool and be on his guard, ever ready to lower his rod-top simultaneously with a jump. The sooner one is grassed the better, as the commotion kicked up by its plunging is likely to scare others from that vicinity, at least for awhile; therefore hold hard, play strongly, and be unsparing of the butt in keeping it away from any of the danger-points previously noted. The hold is usually good in night-fishing, and the circumstances are rather against the more careful and delicate handling which daylight might render advisable.

Some of the above remarks also apply to worm-fishing. But one worm hook is to be recommended, for with Pennell tackle the very probable hooking of eels—the night angler's *bête noire*, would surely complicate matters; besides which, this tackle would not be suitable with salmon gut. For choice of hook, a Model-Perfect, size 5, is a good one, though any straight round-bend of this size will do. I think a long-shanked hook has the objection of allowing a biting fish to feel the steel too much, when it might eject the bait before the

time has come for driving the said steel home. If the water be absolutely dead no lead is required, but should there be a slight movement I consider that one No. 4 shot pinched on about 9 in. above the hook is decidedly useful. The worms should be the same as already recommended for brown trout, but somewhat larger, say 3 in. before extension, or two of the smaller ones put on together make an attractive bait. To bait one worm, run the hook in a little below the head, and thread the worm carefully until able to bring the head part up on the gut beyond the top of the hook-shank; the barb is embedded well above the tail. To bait two worms, bring the hook out at the middle of the first and draw that worm up the gut; then put on the second worm as a single one, save that it only covers the lower part of the hook-shank, and bring down the first worm to meet it. In this way you have head and tail or heads and tails wriggling, which is much better than the obsolete method of entering a hook at the point of the head. Worms may be thrown upstream in the usual way, though with rather more line than as advised for fario, and either brought slowly or let travel down with a slight sink-and-draw motion; or, in a perfectly motionless deep, they may be held steady, but also sunk

and drawn very slightly. They are, too, cast across and directly downstream ; in short, the whole place should be searched as with fly. When the worm is swung out downstream, or, having travelled down, is as far down as a short line will permit, hold it quite steady for awhile, and then move it up and back again a little, very gently, ever in readiness for a bite.

A sea-trout bite is peculiar, and may be described as a ' solid,' firm, but not hard pull downward, always followed by a gentle nibbling. When this is felt give way to it with both rod and line on the moment, pushing the rod-tip towards the fish, and easing off a foot or so of slack, as any sense of restraint might lead to the ejection of the bait. Sea-trout take the worm in slowly, and the angler would do well to count twelve, and that at an equal, rather slow rate, before attempting to strike. If the bait happens to be upstream or opposite when a bite occurs, the strike should be made in the downstream direction, a firm, fairly hard motion ; when taken downstream, no strike should be made, but the rod promptly tightened on the fish.

A small lantern is almost indispensable for this work, both to see that baits are all right and lively as well as to bait by (the bright side can be turned

to the rear), not to speak of its advantage when freeing eels, if hooked. Should the latter misfortune occur, the best thing to do is to put one's foot promptly on the squirmer, and cut the back of its neck deeply with a sharp scissors kept ready for such an emergency. However, it is easy to differentiate between the biting of eels and the nobler quarry by the jag-jagging feel of the first.

I once had an awkward experience while engaged at a place of this sort. I had been brown-trout fishing earlier, and somehow lost the handle of my reel. Darkness had fallen when I reached the pool, the only one of any size in the entire of the little brook. The temptation to try for a sea-trout was irresistible, though I was only provided with fine gear. Before very long I hooked one, a nice fish of 2 lb. 2 oz., and the battle was desperate. It leaped out of water, plunged, and tore line off the crippled winch in several furious rushes, which I could only recover by manipulation with thumb and forefinger, a most tedious process, and I dared not bully it on account of my fine refinucha gut. My relief was great when, after a splendid fight, the fish lay beneath me, exhausted, and I was able to use the net.

Even at the best it is eerie sort of work. A perfectly calm night is to be preferred, and out

of the gloom come startling sounds, as the sharp squawk of a moor-hen, the hoarse honk of a passing heron, the shriek of an owl, or, more welcome than these, the resounding splash of a big sea-trout almost under one's nose. The presence of a congenial companion who takes up a post for himself near by is very desirable, as any angler whose nerves were inclined to be jumpy would soon realise. But exciting work it certainly is, and the value of these beautiful sporting fish, together with the thrills attending their capture, may be held to balance all disagreeables incident to this fishing.

XI: CONCLUDING REMARKS

I THINK I have now exhausted my small store of knowledge of brook-fishing.

If I have been able to give any useful hints, not perhaps generally known, or if I succeed in enlisting even a few recruits to join issue with the trout of these picturesque little streams, my object will have been accomplished.

I have earnestly endeavoured to condense the teaching of over thirty years as far as would be commensurate with necessary explanatory matter, sufficient, I trust, to enable the uninitiated to understand the elementary principles of this fascinating art, and to start work for himself. Experience will do the rest.

Upon the practical value of my hints I am confident that the reader can rely, as I myself am able to do upon the results following their application.

It only remains to add a few final suggestions.

HOOKED FISH.—Notwithstanding that, as I have said, it paralyses a trout to bring it up against the current with mouth over the surface,

if the fish be a large one one must remember that the force of the current plus the trout's weight have to be considered, since if lightly hooked the hold may give under the strain. In such a case look out for some quiet bay into which to tow the fish ; should there be none one must only risk it.

Trout well-hooked usually bore about without showing themselves, but lightly-hooked fish are apt to scuffle on the surface, requiring very gentle treatment, humouring and patience to bring them safely to net.

GUT.—Most casts are sold with a loop at each end, and the novice is thus encouraged to loop on his stretcher or tail fly. As this tends to cause bubbles in the water, and may have a scaring effect, the loop at the finest end of the cast should be cut off and the stretcher knotted on.

Do not wind gut casts around your headgear. The sun and light generally are very prejudicial to it and make it liable to crack.

Upon returning from fishing, keep your gut in some dark, dry place, and same applies to all gut in your possession.

Never set out without first soaking in very tepid water all gut meant to be used or which may be required for use, as well as spare casts, hook

lengths, etc., in view of possible breakages. This can be done while breakfasting. Also test all casts before use; the fish of the day may be lost through this omission.

To straighten out coiled casts, rub each strand firmly between the thumb and forefinger of right hand.

Fig. 13.

The reel line, ending in a small, common knot, is easily attached to loops of casts as follows—

Push the end up through the loop, bring it over both sides of the loop, and push it out through the line-loop at A; draw tight, humouring the line-knot close. To unloose, push up the gut loop. There are several other attachments, but this is a simple and good one. Lines should never be cut.

LINES.—On return, unwind all wet reel-line, and hang up loosely to dry, anywhere save on iron. Or it can be thrown on a couch (my own plan). Otherwise lines soon rot.

WORMS.—After worming, put back in the general depôt all worms left over, *the first thing on return.*

BROKEN ROD.—It sometimes happens that in struggles with hitched-up tackle the top joint goes smash. Lose no time, but lay about $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. of the broken piece with the other, and with the wax-end always carried lap them together as tightly as possible. It can be done in five minutes.

DIARY.—It affords pleasant and useful reading to keep a diary setting forth the result of each day's fishing, the place, description of fish, lures, weather, etc., not forgetting the weather of that night or the following day.

LIST.—Lest anything be forgotten in the hurry of departure, it is an excellent plan to have a list of everything required for a day's fishing hung up in one's ' den ' for scrutiny ere starting. A man looks uncommonly blank after walking perhaps four or five miles at discovering that some *sine quâ non* has been omitted.

Before I adopted this plan I spoilt an odd day at times, and one instance I recollect well, though it did not concern tackle. I hurried off to a brook three miles distant, and for once resolved to thoroughly earn a smoke. I determined not to

take a single whiff till I had killed twelve trout. Well, it was a burning August day, and fish were unusually sulky, and it was not until 4 p.m. that I completed the dozen—a nice lot they were, too, I remember. After a long pull at my cider-bottle, I revelled in thoughts of my long-expected smoke—the lover of our Lady Nicotiana will understand. I pulled out my briar, saw it was clear, and felt for my pouch. Alas! no pouch was there. Matches I had, but by some idiotic oversight I had forgotten the prime factor. Sadly I turned to fishing again, my only consolation that trout came on well towards dusk and helped me to a very respectable pannier. On my way home got some very passable tobacco at a wayside public, and ever since the items, 'pipe, baccy, matches,' have had a conspicuous place on my list.

And now a hint *re* the bull nuisance, which I give in all seriousness, their happy hunting-grounds having a most undesirable affinity with the brookside. A bull is a very real and common danger, and I, *moi que vous parle*, have had some narrow escapes. A brook hardly gives scope for natatory dodging, and it is a customary drinking-place for cattle, which often stand concealed there

till you are upon them. I was once about to drop in over some bushes when a great red back hove in sight below, and the truculent visage of a savage-looking specimen tended to hasten my abrupt departure. It is well to take stock (no pun intended) of all cattle in fields bordering the stream, or in its water, and get into the habit of looking for means of security in case of a sudden sortie, such as gates, wire fences, rails, trees, etc., so as not to be taken unawares. One of the best trout-fishermen I know was not long ago compelled to roost in an oak, like Charles the Second, for three mortal hours, while a brindled monster bellowed beneath, and he was lucky to get there.

I was cheerfully eating my lunch one day, sitting with legs dangling over the bank, with an attendant boy doing the same. We were in an immense treeless pasture-field, at the far end of which I had dimly noticed some cattle feeding. I was instructing Johnny in the scientific use of the landing-net when I heard a stamping noise directly behind, and turning, beheld, to my consternation, the largest red-and-white bull I ever saw engaged in tearing up the turf not fifty yards off, and evidently preparing for a rush.

Said I: "Johnny, don't lose your head; there's a bull behind us."

Johnny: "Oh, lord, sir!"

"Steady, now, a moment."

Johnny: "Us be killed, sir, sure."

"No fear. When I say 'Now,' run like the devil."

Johnny: "I will that, sir."

It seemed providential, for on glancing hurriedly about I had descried a roofless old linnhay not over fifty yards to our left, one broken wall of which formed an inclined plane to the ground. It was the only shelter visible. A fearful roar admonished me to give the fateful word, and I question if a St. Leger favourite could have covered ground more speedily than we did. It was a close shave, as we had barely scrambled up out of reach when the bull came crash against the wall. The ensuing hour was one to be remembered, and then a lowing from the distant herd proved metal more attractive. The siege was raised, and we breathed again.

Let me once more enjoin fishermen to be ever scrupulous in refastening all gates through which they pass. It is only courteous, and neglect in this respect may forfeit one's leave. I can speak with feeling, as from only once forgetting to

secure a certain field-gate I lost some of the best brook trout-fishing I ever had. Need I say, too, that geniality of manner to farmers who have fishing rights is never thrown away? A gentleman will always make himself agreeable and have no reason to regret a few minutes' friendly conversation with these sturdy sons of the soil.

And now for my last hint. I have given it before, but as it is invaluable, and of supreme importance to the brook-angler, I venture to give it again, sincerely hoping that he will keep it in mind under all circumstances—*Whatever you do, keep out of sight of the fish.*

. . . . .

I relinquish my subject with regret. These modest little fisheries grow on one, and we are loth to leave the flowery meads and umbrageous dells, the boulder-strewn ravines and empurpled hills through which they meander. Their gentle prattling speaks to us softly, telling of happy, innocent hours, hours passed with all that is best and purest in Nature, our joint mother, and each visit but endears them more, till we regard them as old friends. And when the time comes for me to lay aside the rod, and reel up for ever, would

that I might rest beneath the primroses of some verdant bank by one of the brooks I have loved so well, lulled to sleep by the sweet melody of its murmuring voice, where—

> Daisies pied and violets blue
> And lady-smocks all silver-white,
> And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
> Do paint the meadows with delight.

THE END

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